

Al-Ahram Weekly



Ghali, portrait of the week by George Bahgory.....p.8

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Moussa: No to Israeli peace

EGYPT will not accept and will actively oppose an Israeli peace in the Middle East, or any other arrangement incompatible with "a balanced peace", asserted Foreign Minister Amr Moussa in an interview with *Al-Ahram*'s London correspondent Amr Abdel-Samir, the full text of which appears in today's *Al-Ahram*.

Moussa, who was interviewed while in the British capital to take part in a conference on peacemaking in the Middle East, also said in the interview that the Palestinian problems should be considered "unresolved" so long as the Palestinians have not been granted the right to self-determination. He warned against "any measures" that may be taken against Syria in order to put pressure on it to visit the peace process.

Moussa reiterated Egypt's position on a Washington-linked report alleging Egypt was receiving Scud missile materials from North Korea. "The Scud issue can be raised only in the context of opening the full file of Israeli missiles and anti-ballistic missiles," he said. Describing Israel's stockpiling of traditional and nuclear weapons as "unacceptable," Moussa warned that so long as Israel maintains this stockpile, an arms race in the region, including nuclear arms, is inevitable.

Hunt goes on

THE US has offered a reward of up to \$2 million for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the blast that killed 19 Americans in Saudi Arabia last week, supplementing a \$2.6 million reward offered by the Saudis.

The Pentagon, meanwhile, denied assertions that Saudi officials had rejected requests to expand a key security zone — a move which might have reduced the number of casualties in the explosion at the US military housing complex.

The Clinton administration said it was sending FBI Director Louis Freeh to Saudi Arabia to help with investigations. US intelligence officials said they were working on the assumption that the bombers had help from other countries. *The Washington Post* quoted the officials as saying they had sketchy information about identified persons who had carried out extensive surveillance operations on several US military housing sites before the bombing.

Shar'a shuttle

SYRIA has succeeded in persuading Bahrain and Iran to end their hostile media campaigns against each other in a first step towards a resumption of normal relations between the two Gulf states. Iranian Foreign Minister Fatouh Al-Shar'a said on Tuesday, at the end of a second shuttle mission to Iran and Bahrain this week, that he was satisfied with both sides' determination to clear up their differences.

Relations between the two countries deteriorated last month when Bahrain openly accused Iran of financing and arming militant groups plotting to overthrow the Sunni Muslim regime. Both countries recalled ambassadors and Iran denied the charges.

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Africa for Ghali

As the United States threatens to veto the re-appointment of Boutros Ghali as UN secretary-general, Africa stands firmly behind him. **Hoda Tawfik** from New York and **Gamal Nkrumah** from Cairo report

Staff at the United Nations are naturally reticent about the subject, but a UN source told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that the bottom line is that the Americans do not want to have a secretary-general who has a mind of his, or her, own. Here lies the crux of the whole matter. UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has a mind of his own. He may not have a hidden agenda, but he is single-minded.

An Arab diplomatic source in New York told the *Weekly*, "The US wants to have a secretary-general who would be a yes-man." The US wants a puppet at the helm to facilitate its foreign policy priorities and to be ready to cater to Washington's every whim.

"We think there are other people in the world more capable of pursuing the UN reform agenda," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry earlier this week. In a press briefing yesterday, Nicholas Burns, US State Department spokesman, underscored the US's determination to see Ghali out of the UN, by saying the US was ready to treat him [Ghali] with respect and to do what we can to make sure that the UN functions well in his remaining time in office."

The same diplomatic source said that the US was working feverishly behind the scenes to find an acceptable African personality to put forward as a candidate against Ghali. This, the source said, is the only way the US can undermine Ghali in his own African constituency.

The world's great powers, with the notable exception of the US, stand firmly behind the UN secretary-general. "We are of the view that Boutros Ghali has done a very good job under very difficult circumstances," said Canadian Premier Jean Chrétien. "Everyone knows the esteem and friendship that I and all the Europeans have for the secretary-general," French President Jacques Chirac added.

There are two conflicting theories gaining circulation in the UN regarding the future of the beleaguered secretary-general. The first claims that the Americans are in reality rather reticent about their apparent resolve to oust Boutros Ghali. The insinuation is that their bark is worse than their bite. Perhaps, therefore, if US President Bill Clinton is re-elected, then some face-saving solution will be arrived at whereby the Americans will suffer Boutros Ghali for another two years in office until a more complying personality is selected as a compromise.

The second theory is that the Americans are pretty serious about their intention of denying Boutros Ghali a chance to be re-instated. According to this theory, the

Americans will make sure, come what may, that a more suitable candidate will be chosen to replace Ghali. It is this second theory that is fast gaining ground in New York. However, there are several stumbling blocks. The most important of these is that, hitherto, a system of rotation has been applied by which a particular region has a UN secretary-general staying in office for two terms. So far Africa is the only region that has not had a UN secretary-general serving for two terms. If Boutros Ghali stays on in office, then an African would have held the post for two six-year periods. But, if he is not re-elected, then another African candidate might be selected by the Americans to replace him. The big question is who would that African be?

The person whose name has been most often mentioned at the UN as a prospective candidate for the position is the Ghanaian Kofi Annan, the head of the UN's peacekeeping operations worldwide. Annan is the most probable compromise candidate for several reasons. Annan, unlike most other prospective candidates such as Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, Irish President Mary Robinson and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, is seen as a skilled bureaucrat and, most importantly, not a man with strong views.

The self-effacing and business-like Annan is a favourite of the Americans. He has many admirers in London and in Washington. Ghali, Ogata, Brundtland and Robinson are all seen as egotistic and opinionated. Annan is an Anglophone. Ghali, despite his impeccable English, has always been seen in both London and Washington as a Francophone at heart.

Brundtland, a former head of the UN Environment Commission, and Robinson, who took herself out of the running when she issued an official statement last week stating that she does not want the post, are ruled out because three of the six UN secretary-generals to date have been European. Ogata might stand a better chance because she is Japanese. But Annan, as an African, stands the best chance of all.

Next week's summit meeting in Cameroon of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which will be attended by Boutros Ghali, is expected to endorse the secretary-general's re-election bid. Some OAU member states, especially among the Anglophone nations, may be secretly sympathetic to Annan's candidacy. But diplomatic observers note that few, if any, African countries will do anything to seriously undermine Boutros Ghali.



TAKING THE PLUNGE: As temperatures soar in Cairo, few destinations are as popular as El-Qanater, north of the city, where the towers of Muhammad Ali's barrage can serve as a convenient diving board.

Netanyahu's days

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated his hardline peace rhetoric ahead of his visit to the White House on 9 July, and insisted there could be no peace without security.

Speaking to his Likud-led, right-wing coalition in the Knesset yesterday, Netanyahu said that "gone is the age when Israel concedes to demands from the Arabs who have not fulfilled the basic requirements for peaceful relations".

High on the agenda of his talks at the White House will be Israel's commitment to implementing the peace agreements concluded by the previous Labour government.

Netanyahu said he will hold talks on Friday with his cabinet, as well as army and security chiefs, on the long-delayed Israeli withdrawal from Hebron.

According to Israeli press reports, Israel's commander in the central region, Uzi Dayan, has submitted four alternative plans for redeployment, all proposing expansion of the Jewish sector of Hebron.

Netanyahu told the Foreign Press Association on Tuesday he was ready for more economic openness, but all he could offer politically was self-rule.

The Israeli daily *Haaretz* yesterday published a long list of complaints against Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, which Netanyahu will present to US President Clinton. The list accuses the PNA of infringing on Israel's authority over the borders of the self-rule territories and in the affairs of Jerusalem. It also accuses Arafat of not doing enough to crack down on terrorism.

Palestinians had already prepared their own list of Israeli violations of the peace accords including the failure to withdraw from Hebron, release Palestinian prisoners, or end the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (see editorial p.8)

Murder on the Nile?

A classic case of whodunnit continues to baffle Egyptologists: Was the boy-king Tutankhamun the victim of "murder most foul". **Omayma Abdel-Latif** investigates

The riddle of the Sphinx may have already been answered, but a recent revelation by two British Egyptologists about King Tutankhamun's cause of death has many experts perturbed and sceptical.

In what has taken the form of an Agatha Christie mystery — one of Christie's mysteries took place in Egypt — and using the technological equivalent of Holmesian deductive reasoning, the two British Egyptologists, pouring over X-rays of Tut's mummy, stated that the grave injury to the boy-king's skull is clearly indicative of murder in the first degree.

Though the "whodunnit" is not clear, the cause of death, they assert, was a deliberate blow to the head, possibly delivered while the young king was asleep.

While some Egyptologists chalked up the discovery as little more than a glorified murder mystery, other experts note that there is ample historical evidence to point to the fact that it could have been a political assassination.

Professor Tofra Handoussa, head of Cairo University's Egyptology Department in the Faculty of Archaeology, stated that in the 18th Dynasty, conspiracies were rife. Since the cause of his death has always been shrouded in mystery, "it could be true that the boy-king was the victim of a conspiracy," she told *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in November 1922 by Howard Carter, coupled with the 5,000 perfectly preserved artefacts in his resting place, sparked off one of Egyptology's greatest mysteries, both about the young pharaoh's life and the times he lived in. It was, say some Egyptologists, like an old, incomplete jigsaw puzzle.

For Egyptologists, these missing pieces provided ample "food for the little grey cells" in their search to unearth the truth about Tutankhamun's death. "It is possible that he may have been assassinated, either because he was too young to be in power,

or because Amun priests, who forced him to change his name, wanted to wipe out the Akhmenet family once and for all," said Handoussa.

Historical references, including hieroglyphs found in his tomb, reveal that Tutankhamun came to power when he was nine years-old. Although he was one of Akhmenet's sons — in-law, his parentage has not yet been definitely established.

At the start of his reign, he lived in Tel El-Amarna, and was known as Tutakhtaten. A stela found in the Temple of Karnak, reveals that shortly thereafter, he returned to Thebes to worship Amun, and changed his name to Tutankhamun, signifying the living image of Amun.

But according to Handoussa, this could have been where he found himself in

Queen Hatshepsut, King Ahmose, Tutmosis I, Tutmosis III and Amenhotep III, the period ended with chaos ruling the day.

Following Tutankhamun's death in 1332 BC, the political situation fell apart, with widespread rioting prevailing for a period of four years until Horemheb took the throne in 1348 BC.

However, the conclusions, in the eyes of other Egyptologists, are less than elementary. Zahi Hawass, head of the Giza Plateau Antiquities Directorate, said that after Tutankhamun's tomb was unearthed in 1922, Carter directed most of his research efforts to studying the mummy. However, said Hawass, no mention was made about an attempt to kill the king. These kinds of theories, he added, have a way of snowballing. "Today they claim Tutankhamun was assassinated, tomorrow they might come up with the theory that Ramses II died of a heart attack."

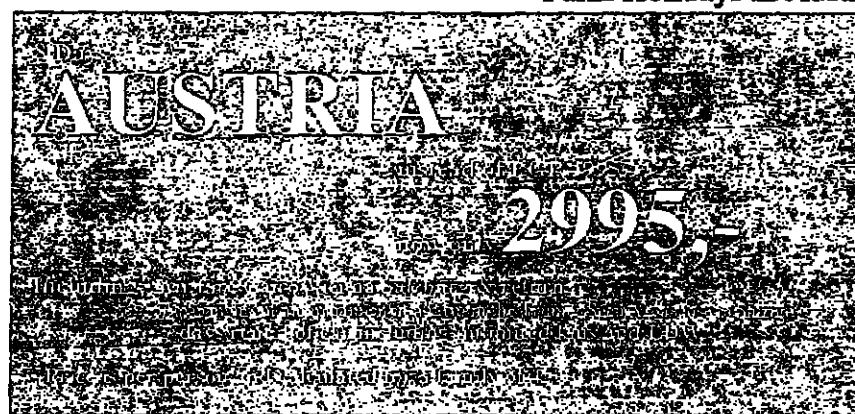
Abdel-Halim Nureddin, head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities was similarly dismissive of the assassination theory. "There is no material evidence that points to the fact that he was killed. What we do know is that he died at the age of 18, but the cause of death is unknown." Several X-rays of the mummy have been taken following its discovery, he added, but until now, there has been no talk of an assassination.

Nasry Iskandar, a forensic pathologist attached to the Egyptian Museum, agrees. Having analysed most of the royal mummies, Iskandar ruled out the possibility that the injury was caused by a deliberate blow to the skull.

"It's common to find that the skulls of the mummies are cracked or damaged, but this does not prove that they were murdered," he said.

Iskandar plans to begin his own studies on the decomposed mummy of the young pharaoh, which rests in a sarcophagus in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

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Mubarak with Chirac at the Elysée Palace; and the next day with Sheikh Zayed in Geneva on his way back to Cairo



The France factor

President Mubarak's brief visit to France this week, close on the heels of the Cairo Arab Summit, underlined the growing significance of France's role in the region. **Nevine Khalil** reviews the visit.

President Hosni Mubarak visited Paris for 24 hours on Monday to discuss the peace process with French President Jacques Chirac, who is seeking a greater role for Europe in the Middle East. The two presidents found much common ground regarding the current situation in the region, and the steps that should be taken to bolster peace negotiations, and the meeting represented a coming together of Arab and European positions regarding the peace process and its future after the election in Israel of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Chirac and Mubarak, who led the Arabs to their first summit in six years, reviewed the outcome of the 22 June Arab summit, the G7 industrial countries meeting on 29 June in Lyon and the European summit in Florence, a week earlier. All three meetings had discussed the peace process, and advocated the land-for-peace formula.

After their discussions, both presidents called for the continuation of negotiations on the basis of the existing accords, within the framework of the 1991 Madrid conference. "We do not want to interrupt the peace process, because it is in the interests of the

whole region," Mubarak told reporters after two-hour talks with Chirac on Monday night. "But the principle of land-for-peace must be maintained." He said that his scheduled meeting later this month with Netanyahu would decide how negotiations would proceed.

Although Egypt appears to be turning to Europe to play a more substantial role in the peace process, the US, Egypt continues to stress, remains the main peace broker in the region. Foreign Minister Amr Moussa denied reports of tensions between Egypt and US, saying that the US role as "an honest broker, helping both sides to reach a solution," must continue.

Chirac's France had already underlined its renewed interest in the Middle East and the peace process when Paris helped broker a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese Hizbullah guerrillas in April. Mubarak described France's stand on the peace process as "very strong," while Chirac said that his views and analyses of the situation were very similar to Mubarak's.

During his visit to Cairo in May, Chirac committed Europe to expanding its role in the peace process. "Europe cannot only be a financier," he said. "It must increase its political input so that it will become one of the sponsors." He added

that he hoped to give France's Middle East policy "a new vitality".

Contacts for Mubarak's visit began before the EU summit two weeks ago — sufficient time for France "to fully comprehend the Arab position," especially that of frontline states in the negotiations, according to Osama El-Baz, Mubarak's political advisor. "Egypt attaches much importance to the French stand, and we understand that France has played a major role in crystallising the European view," he said. Chirac told reporters that the final statements at the three summits show "the collective will supporting the peace process".

Egypt, meanwhile, applauded the EU and G7 communiques which supported the land-for-peace formula as a principle for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The communiques called upon all parties in the Middle East to carry out their obligations under the peace process, saying that a comprehensive peace in the region could only be achieved on the basis of the principles of the Madrid conference and UN resolutions.

"The peace process cannot continue unless the land-for-peace principle is adopted," Moussa said. He told reporters in Paris: "Egypt, Arab states and the European countries are par-

ticipating in a positive way towards building the peace process."

Minister of Information Safwat El-Sherif said that Egyptian-French coordination was a symbol of Arab-European coordination since Mubarak was speaking on behalf of the Arab nations, and Chirac for the Europeans. "This meeting is the cornerstone for Arab-European coordination," El-Sherif added. Egypt's Ambassador to Paris Ali Maher underscored the importance of Egyptian diplomacy at this time, to face the challenges and obstacles hindering the peace process.

Mubarak also met with the head of France's Jewish community, Henri Hajdenberg whom he reportedly told that the peace process "must continue because its completion is the best way of ensuring Israeli security".

On his way back to Cairo on Tuesday, Mubarak stopped over for a few hours in Geneva to meet with the United Arab Emirates president, Sheikh Zayed Al-Nahyan, to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the results of the Cairo and Paris meetings. Before leaving for Cairo, Mubarak also met with UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

Opposition editor attacked

Last Monday's attack on Magdi Hussein, the editor of the Islamist newspaper *Al-Shaab*, has the journalist seething and Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi investigating. **Amira Howeldy** reports

With its headline reading, "A barbarous attack on *Al-Shaab*'s editor," last Tuesday's edition of *Al-Shaab*, the mouthpiece of the Islamist-orientated Labour party, devoted its front page and subsequent column inches in other pages to the attack on its editor, Magdi Hussein, by unidentified culprits.

Twenty-four hours after the incident, the Press Syndicate issued a statement condemning the attack which "raises various questions in the minds of journalists". The statement pointed out that the incident is the second of its kind, with the first being when the editor of *Al-Had* newspaper, Gamal Badawi, fell victim to a similar attack in May 1995. The police has not yet arrested the perpetrators.

The statement warned that "turning a blind eye to such incidents, without arresting those

who committed them, is an unprecedented, dangerous and unique phenomenon that threatens the freedom of society and the security of its individuals more than it threatens the freedom of the press and safety of the reporters".

According to *Al-Shaab*'s report of the incident, the 45-year old editor was attacked and severely beaten on Monday at 1.30 in the afternoon by seven "body-builder" types, which the paper alleged were civilian-clothed security men. The attack took place as Hussein stopped at a traffic light close to the *Al-Shaab* and Labour Party offices in Sayeda Zeinab. The seven men, claimed the report, came out of two cars which had been tailing Hussein from the moment he left his home in Manyal El-Roda across the Nile.

When Hussein's car stopped at the traffic light, one of the two cars carrying the security forces sped past, cut in front of it and reversed into it. In a matter of seconds the seven men got out of their cars, pulled Hussein from his car, and "se-

verely beat him after pushing him to the ground. They broke his glasses and stole his suitcase and car keys before speeding away in their cars, with two motorcycles clearing the road ahead," reported *Al-Shaab*. This lead story was published alongside two large photos of a bruised and blood-stained Hussein lying in hospital.

The newspaper also mentioned that this attack was subsequent to several death threats Hussein received over the phone over the past few weeks. The threats, the paper noted, came after *Al-Shaab* published a series of "documented" stories accusing the two sons of Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi of misusing their father's authority for various business gains.

A source in the Interior Ministry's Information Centre told the *Weekly* that the minister was "very disturbed" at hearing of the attack and immediately formed a task force drawn from the ranks of the Cairo Bureau of the State Security Investigations (SSI), to investigate the incident. The source, however, pointedly remarked that after Hussein was attacked, he "refused" to lodge a formal complaint with the police, as would any victim. Asked whether El-Alfi will an-

swer Hussein's accusations, the source said it was "very unlikely".

Meanwhile, the Labour party's legal consultant Helmi Murad told the *Weekly* that Hussein will file a law suit against El-Alfi's sons demanding an investigation into the sources of their "massive fortune". Hussein, on the other hand, said that he intends to seek a meeting with President Hosni Mubarak so that the president can "intervene to stop these attacks on journalists".

Hussein views this recent attack as a warning by El-Alfi to end the campaign against his two sons but, he said, "I will not stop. I'll continue, whatever the price" he told the *Weekly*. Responding to questions on why he did not lodge a complaint with the police, Hussein argued that "the issue has become a political, not a legal one... and how can I turn to the same authorities [for help] that I accuse of attacking me?"

He admitted that although he sustained physical injuries, the incident has "served" him very well. "We can now simply call for the removal of El-Alfi as we did with former Interior Minister, Zaki Badr," he said.

Water everywhere...

Zeinab Abul-Gheit reports on an original project aimed at conserving precious water

In many homes throughout Egypt gallons of water are wasted every day through leaks and inefficient plumbing. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Egypt's available potable water is lost before it can be used: 15 per cent is lost from the water networks before reaching the consumer; the remaining 35 per cent either seeps under bathroom and kitchen floors, drips unheeded from leaking taps, or is flushed away in over-large lavatory cisterns.

This is waste that the nation can ill afford: the internationally recognised minimum annual water requirement per individual is calculated at 1,000 cubic metres. In Egypt, the average share is only 935 cubic metres. And, while the population will have risen considerably by the year 2000, the amount of potable water available will remain at 1990 levels — 3.1 billion cubic metres per year.

But while these figures seem grim, there is an obvious solution — if the water which is currently lost was saved, it would go a long way towards providing the population, including those who currently do not have water piped into their homes, with their water requirements for the 21st century. To this end, a pioneering project by the National Community Water Conservation Programme (NCWCP) is raising awareness of the seriousness of the situation, and offering simple, practical ways to save water in the home and public places.

A study carried out at the Mogamma government building in Cairo's Tahrir Square demonstrated the extent of the problem. During the period between midnight and 4am, when the building was unoccupied, 80 per cent of the water initially present in pipes and lavatories was lost. After carrying out repairs on seven of the Mogamma's 13 floors, water loss was reduced by 30 per cent.

The NCWCP's initial project concentrated on the governorates of Cairo, Ismailia and Suez, and implemented 100 small schemes in these areas, the largest of which was the distribution of 100,000 plastic water displacement bags. When put

into lavatory cisterns, these bags take up space equivalent to two litres of water, saving an equivalent amount every time the lavatory is flushed. "Through low-cost technology, this programme aims at making people realise that it is possible to save water," explained Mahmoud Mahmoud, head of the NCWCP's information centre. According to studies, the ideal capacity for a lavatory cistern is 6-7 litres; the average capacity of an Egyptian lavatory cistern, however, ranges between 8-12 litres. It is estimated that each household using the bag will save 40 litres per day. Overall, the bags should save two million cubic metres of water annually, enough to provide 10,000 families with running water.

To promote self-sufficiency, the project insisted that the bags be made in Egypt, although the costs were higher. "Egyptian money should be put into Egyptian products," argued Mahmoud. As a result of the scheme's success, another million bags will be produced to be distributed in seven governorates in the next stage of the programme.

Water conservation is a cost effective policy. It costs the Cairo Governorate 46 piastres to purify one cubic metre of water, only 10 piastres of which is passed on to the consumer. Therefore, it has been calculated that the 100,000 water displacement bags have actually saved LE1 million. "Our aim was to make people recognise that a small plastic bag could save millions of pounds," explained Isam Nada, of the Community Action Coordination Team, a group affiliated to the project. "Saving drinking water means saving money," added Mahmoud. "The money saved here should be used to provide water pipes for the 30 per cent of Cairo that do not have running water."

According to Ashraf Nassar, an engineer

working in the field of industry and development, there are many other ways — in addition to being leak-free — that new technology can help save water. One simple example is a shower head made with fewer holes, each with a smaller diameter. The new shower head provides ten litres of water every minute, in comparison to the 25-30 litres from an old-style shower. Taps can also be made more efficient if their copper core is replaced with ceramic material, and proper washers can reduce waste by 30 per cent. Spring-loaded taps, and metered taps providing between 0.50-2 litres of water in 30 seconds, are also products of the new technology. Used in public facilities in Suez, such taps have saved 15,000 cubic metres a year, Nassar said. This saving, he added, would be sufficient to provide running water to 55 households.

To ensure that new systems are properly installed and existing ones efficiently maintained, the project recognised the need for a well trained force of plumbers. To this end the project came up with a system for licensing plumbers, which has now been approved by the Ministry of Manpower. In addition, the Ministry of Reconstruction, industrial schools and companies are now running training courses in plumbing for unemployed graduates.

Promoting public awareness is another vital part of the project's work. The programme has gone out into the community to promote itself through mosques, churches and social groups. Conservation groups have been formed in 4,500 schools in Cairo. Cooperation agreements have been reached between the programme and tourist villages, with technical advice provided and new plumbing specifications agreed upon. Symposia and meetings have been held in local councils, and non-governmental organisations have agreed to promote water conservation awareness. Water conservation programmes have been successfully implemented in public institutions like hospitals, churches, mosques and schools.

Egypt-US relations: 'differences not crisis'

President Mubarak denied there was a crisis in Egyptian-US relations, despite differences in views on several regional issues. **Khaled Dawoud** reports

President Hosni Mubarak's statements this week, denying a reported crisis in relations between Egypt and the United States, confirmed that Cairo was not seeking an escalation of its differences with Washington over the future of the Arab-Israeli peace process and the armament situation in the region.

In earlier statements, Foreign Minister Amr Moussa told reporters, "I cannot describe Egyptian-American relations as tense or stiff. But there are points of difference concerning the evaluation of certain issues related to the peace process and other matters". He added that such differences in views "were normal in international relations" and also existed between the United States and Israel.

Reports of an Egyptian-American dispute immediately followed the announcement of the convening of the Arab summit in Cairo, after a meeting between President Mubarak, Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz in Damascus in mid-June.

US State Department officials were not discreet in expressing their dismay that the summit was going to take place immediately after the tight victory of Israeli right-wing Premier Benjamin Netanyahu. An American official who accompanied US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on his visit to Israel and Egypt last week told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that the US administration would have preferred the summit not to have taken place. "The statement issued by Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia after their meeting in Damascus could have been enough to express their worries after the change of government in Israel," the official said.

Reporters who accompanied Christopher on his tour of the region quoted him as saying that the American administration was not satisfied with all the statements included in the Arab leaders' final communiqué released on 23 June at the end of their two-day meeting in Cairo. He described the communiqué as a general document, reflecting a variety of views ranging from those of radical Arab countries such as Libya and Sudan to the conservative oil-rich Gulf states.

Following his talks with Mubarak in Cairo last week, Christopher reiterated the American view that all efforts should be directed towards resuming negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. "All that we are saying is that the parties should sit together and talk about their differences," US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters last week.

During his visit to Paris on Monday, Mubarak said he would not reach any conclusions on the future of the peace process until meeting Netanyahu in Cairo after the Israeli premier's visit to Washington this week. Mubarak is also due to meet US President Bill Clinton in late July.

But the American dissatisfaction over the Arab summit was not only limited to official statements. One day before the opening of the Arab summit, on 21 June, the *Washington Times* published a "leaked" CIA report saying Egypt had purchased advanced Scud C missile materials from North Korea, violating US laws on weapons proliferation.

During the peak of the dispute between Egypt and Israel last year over Cairo's insistence that Tel Aviv should also sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and open its nuclear installations to international inspection, the United States stood firmly behind its "strategic ally" in its rejection of the treaty.

Annoyed by the fuss which Egypt caused over the matter and its lobbying of Arab countries to join its stand, the response was a series of similarly "leaked" CIA reports. The reports quoted US officials as expressing their dismay over Egypt's maintaining of relations with Libya, and accusing Cairo of breaking the UN embargo imposed on Tripoli for its alleged involvement in the Lockerbie bombing in 1988, which killed 270 people. A series of reports also appeared in American newspapers, containing allegations of corruption against several Egyptian senior government officials. The leakage of reports, however, stopped when the crisis over the treaty was over.

Egypt, by now adept at being the object of such American campaigns, decided to ignore the latest Scud-C furore. But Israel did not. Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy expressed concern over reports of the deal, while Israeli television's Channel Two added its own touch to the affair, claiming that Egypt had also bought Scud missile launchers from Slovenia. The Slovenian government immediately issued a statement saying that as it did not possess Scud C missiles, it was hardly in a position to sell Scud launchers.

Asked if Christopher's visit had cleared up the matter of the reported North Korean deal, a senior Egyptian diplomat told the *Weekly*: "You should ask the Americans if this matter is over. They were the ones who raised it in the first place." He added that Egypt's clear stand on the issue was that if there was going to be any discussion on armaments in the region, it should include all types of weapons, including the weapons of mass destruction and highly sophisticated nuclear weapons possessed by Israel.

Cairo currently receives a total of \$2.1 billion per year in aid from the United States. The close relationship between the two countries since the mid-70s has had a major impact in the region, particularly during the 1990 Gulf War and in convincing Arab parties to take part in the opening of the Madrid peace conference in 1991.

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A palace for all children

Within the framework of an ambitious plan adopted by the General Organisation for Cultural Palaces (GOCP) in conjunction with the Cabinet's Information Centre, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak last week inaugurated the first specialised cultural palace for handicapped and non-handicapped children. Rania Khalaf reports.

The bi-level palace offers children a variety of services including a small workshop for plastic arts, science clubs, theatre, puppet shows, a library and musical activities. Also part of the centre is a computer club which provides the children with specialised training and use of the Internet.

Praising the efforts exerted in establishing this unique project, Mrs Mubarak said that the cultural palace "includes everything I could have dreamed of for handicapped children." The new palace also houses a special library and studio, stocked with state-of-the-art equipment for recording songs and stories for blind children. These studios, she added, will also be used to produce special cassettes for handicapped children. Mrs Mubarak recommended that these tapes be distributed to different cultural palaces in various governorates.

Commenting on the project, Hussein Mahran, head of the GOCP, said that the new centre is part and parcel of the Reading For All festival sponsored by Mrs Mubarak. This new centre, he added, will provide children with the proper environment under which they can nurture and develop their skills and talents. The palace, said Mahran, is an integrated information centre that encompasses all activities related to the needs of children and is linked to other specialised children's cultural palaces throughout the country.

"This will help encourage children to perform their music shows in other palaces," he said. To help the children learn how to use the equipment there will be several highly-qualified trainers in different fields.

The GOCP, said Mahran, plans to establish a new children's cultural palace every year to help meet the "cultural" requirements of Egyptian children. New, specialised cultural palaces are currently being built in the governorates of Menoufiya, Sohag, Menya, Qena, Qalubia, Kaff Al-Sheikh and Bahariya.

At the inauguration of this centre, Mrs Mubarak attended a puppet show staged by handicapped and mentally challenged children. Fatma El-Mas'udi, the director of the palace and producer of the show, said that the palace offers talented, handicapped children an excellent opportunity to participate in plays and concerts. By engaging in these activities alongside other children, handicapped children will be able to lead a more stable life, she said.



Intellectual honours

The state's annual merit and incentive awards for achievement in literature, the arts and social science have been met — for the first time in years — with approval. Amira Howaidy applauds the winners

"I was very happy, not because I got one myself, but because it is the first time in 30 or 40 years that three women have received the state's merit awards," recipient Latifa El-Zayyat told *Al-Ahram Weekly* upon the announcement of the state's 1995 annual Merit and Incentive Awards for distinguished achievement in literature, the arts and social science.

True enough, the honours, first awarded in 1960 and marked by a gold medal and LE5,000, had, in recent years, gained the reputation of ignoring women and carrying favour with officialdom.

Candidates for the merit awards are nominated by universities, the Arabic Language Academy and other literary and artistic societies. Candidates for the incentive awards nominate themselves. Two years ago, the Higher Cultural Council, the body affiliated to the Ministry of Culture which chooses the final recipients, announced that it was raising the value of the award from LE5,000 to LE25,000 in response to criticism of their low amount. However, the rise has not been passed on to this year's award winners.

According to Gaber Asfour, head of the Higher Cultural Council, the decision was drafted into a law that has not yet been passed by the People's Assembly. "It's out of our hands now," he told the *Weekly*. "Perhaps the People's Assembly had more important laws to deal with, like the press law."

In literature, this year's merit awards went to prominent Islamic advocate and TV personality, Mustafa Mahmoud, aged 75, novelist Latifa El-Zayyat, aged 73, and critic Badawi Tabana. The arts award went to film director Henry Barakat and painter Tahia Halim. Aisha Rateb, professor of international law and former minister of social affairs, social scientist Said Ashour, historian Yuman Labib Rizq and professor of philosophy Fuad Zakaria won the social science awards. Recipients of 16 incentive awards included prominent musician Ahmed El-Saedi and cartoonist Mona Abul-Nasr.

Aisha Rateb, generally accepted as Egypt's most popular social affairs minister, is a professor at Cairo University and was Egypt's first woman ambassador. As minister for a seven-year stretch, her policies, oriented towards reinforcing women's status and community service, often stirred controversy. In 1977 she resigned from office in protest at the late President Anwar El-Sadat's summary dismissal of the food riots of January of that year as a "thieves' uprising". Rateb returned once again to the academic fold, where she had been the first woman on the international law staff of Cairo University's Faculty of Law and the first woman on the Faculty's council. Her published works include *The 23rd of July Revolution* and *International Arab Relations*.

Tahia Halim is best known for her prolific paintings inspired by Nubia, which she visited many times before it was submerged under the Aswan High Dam. The themes of most of Halim's work are derived from Egyptian folklore, creating what critics consider a unique school of art. In 1959 she opened the School of Painting, and in 1969 she received the state's incentive award for her painting "More than stone". In celebration of the artist's work, El-Gomhouriya National Theatre last month staged a play about her life story.

Philosopher and prominent writer, Fuad Zakaria was flung from the ivory towers of academia into the political lime light in the early seventies when he wrote a series of articles attacking Nasserist authoritarianism after Sadat's Corrective Revolution. Zakaria pursued this trend when he answered Mo-

hamed Hassanein Heikal's *Autumn of Fury* — (a criticism of Sadat's 1981 arrest campaign) in his book *Furious for how long?* Although Zakaria has written extensively on German philosophy and the modern schools of philosophy, he is more famous for his political views and his public debates, especially his discussions with leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood at the Doctors' Syndicate. Zakaria was also editor of *Fekr Mu'asser* (Contemporary Thought), the only Arab magazine specialising in social and philosophical issues.

Mustafa Mahmoud is a graduate of Cairo University's School of Medicine, and a specialist in chest diseases. He turned to journalism in 1957 and became one of the most prolific authors of his time, writing over 30 novels, short stories and plays in addition to hundreds of articles and many books which reflected his famous shift from existentialism to Islamism.

Mahmoud is perhaps best-known for his TV programme, broadcast in Egypt and in many parts of the Arab world, in which he tries to explain the links between modern science and Islamic doctrine. He is famous also for the mosque and hospital he established in Mohandessin in 1975 which carry his name. Thousands of people visit the mosque, particularly at feast times.

Henry Barakat has directed memorable films such as *Afrah We Arah* (Mouths and Rabbits) and *Al-Haram* (The Forbidden). He directed his first documentary film, *Traffic in Alexandria*, in 1939, and his first feature film *Always in My Heart* in 1946.

Writer, literary critic and professor of English literature, Latifa El-Zayyat was raised in a family of nationalists, and began her political activities as an English literature student at Cairo University. Her long history of political commitment, stretching from university demonstrations in 1946 to her imprisonment under Sadat's sweeping arrest campaign in 1981, earned her the reputation of an activist intellectual. El-Zayyat has also remained active as head of the Committee for the Defence of National Culture, which is currently lobbying against normalisation with Israel and the formation of a Middle East market. El-Zayyat's latest work, *Search Campaign — Personal Papers*, was published in 1994.

According to prominent critic Ali El-Razi, El-Zayyat "has always been active with energy". Her award was long overdue, he added.

"There is no doubt that this year's awards are generally — far better than in previous years," El-Razi told the *Weekly*. "It is also an indication that the selection process is working well." While describing the choice of three women, including El-Zayyat, as "very pleasing", he believes the selection process would work even better if voting procedures were changed. In his view, the direct affiliation of the bodies concerned with the nomination procedures to the Ministry of Culture has always given the ministry the right to "control" the final results.

But Asfour sees it differently. "We do not 'control' anything; we are the body which receives the nominations, goes through the bio-data of the nominees and then transfers them to the voting committee."

The committee includes such prominent figures as

Naghib Mahfouz, Aisha Abdel-Rahman and Lutfi El-Kholi. However, such a committee, Asfour added, would never be able to reach a complete consensus.

"There are generation gaps, cultural and political differences and various schools of thought, which is part of our rich cultural life. How could these people ever all agree?" Some had applauded Mustafa Mahmoud's award, while others were disappointed. But this was only to be expected, argued Asfour, in a diverse society "where some people even consider a great laureate like Mahfouz as an infidel".

Critic Mahmoud Amin El-Alem, while agreeing that the selection was an improvement over previous years, maintained that this year's selection "should have been better". The Higher Cultural Council, he said, should not have followed the habit of "balancing the award winners" — selecting both secularists and Islamists, for example. However, he hailed Fuad Zakaria's selection as a "genuine appreciation" of the man.

Two years ago the awards came under fire in the national press because some of them had gone to cabinet ministers and other official figures, in what seemed to be exercises in back-slapping and flattery. Compared to the early years of the awards in the sixties — "the golden age of modern Egyptian culture" — when the honours went to people such as Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, Abdel-Rahman El-Sharawi and Zaki Tulaimat.

But this year's prizes might be an attempt to restore the golden age of the state's merit and incentive awards, especially as most of the recipients are at the peak of their careers. "We are in a strange transitional era" says El-Alem, "where things are changing and unclear, but we have every reason to be optimistic."

Edited by Wadie Kirolos

Al-Ahram: A Diwan of contemporary life

On Thursday, 15 March 1900, seven officers of the Egyptian army were brought, under heavy guard, into the main reception hall in Abdin Palace, where they remained standing until Khedive Abbas Helmi II appeared. After a short time, His Royal Highness entered into the company of the minister of war, the deputy sirdar of the Egyptian army and a number of senior generals. The occasion marks the conclusion of a relatively unknown chapter in Egyptian history.

He told them, "I summoned you before me today in order to inform you of my grave distress at your deeds. You have brought disgrace to the Egyptian army and you have therefore been expelled from the military service in which you are no longer fit to serve. I have issued the orders to strip you of your ranks and medals so that it may be known that I always support the sirdar and approve of everything he has done to improve the system of the Egyptian army."

The seven officers so castigated were captains Mahmoud Effendi Mukhtar and Hassan Effendi Labib, first lieutenants Mustafa Effendi Lutfi, Saleh Effendi Zaki and Mohamed Effendi Tawfiq, and second lieutenants Ahmed Effendi Shaker and Abdel-Hamid Effendi Shukri.

This "occurrence" to which the khedive referred had preoccupied public opinion over the previous two months. However, before learning the nature of this "occurrence", we must review the circumstances that prevailed during the last year of the 19th century.

After the Anglo-Egyptian expedition succeeded in recapturing Sudan, most of the Egyptian army was relocated to Omdurman in northern Sudan. Organised in a manner that would guarantee the British the greatest control, the army consisted of soldiers of Sudanese or Egyptian peasant origin, junior officers from the Egyptian middle class and senior officers, mostly British with a minority from Egypt's Turkish aristocracy.

Hardly had the British regained Sudan than they entered the Boer War in South Africa, or the Transvaal War as *Al-Ahram* referred to it. After numerous setbacks, the British decided to call in Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, who had been sirdar of the Egyptian army. Kitchener's successes in the campaign to bring down the Mahdist regime were considered to have given him extensive expertise in the art of military conflict in the African arena.

Concurrent with these developments was the nascent Egyptian nationalist movement which gained momentum after Mustafa Kamel began publication of *Al-Liwa* (The Banner) in January 1900. *Al-Liwa* launched a vehement campaign against the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899 and on 19 January, the newspaper appeared week-end in black to mourn the first anniversary of this agreement. The first anniversary of this agreement had a profound effect on public opinion, particularly on those mid-level officers of Egyptian mid-

dle class origin.

Against this background, we turn to the "occurrence" that precipitated the discharge of seven Egyptian officers.

We get our first glimpse of the story in *Al-Ahram* of 2 February 1900. *Al-Ahram*'s article is based on reports that appeared in three other national newspapers. It first cited a report that appeared in *Al-Muqattam* under the headline "Soldiers' mutiny" to the effect that the Ministry of War had issued orders to strip Egyptian army soldiers stationed in Omdurman of their arms. After refusing to comply at first, two Sudanese battalions eventually turned in their weapons. *Le Progrès Egyptien*'s version, cited in *Al-Ahram*, was slightly different. *Le Progrès* reported that soldiers in Omdurman had violated military regulations, provoking army officers to take the precaution of ordering them to hand in their weapons. Two battalions refused at first and then complied. According to the *Egyptian Gazette*, however, the officers ordered the soldiers to hand in their weapons because the weapons themselves were defective and had caused several unfortunate accidents. At first the soldiers of the two Sudanese battalions misinterpreted the orders as a sign of mistrust, even though they eventually complied without incident.

Al-Ahram then offered its own version of the incident: "When we reported this news about stripping the soldiers of their arms a little over a month ago, we only made scant mention of it because intelligence sources denied it. However, people who have recently arrived from Sudan inform us that rancour has not only assailed the hearts of the Sudanese battalions, but soldiers and officers in the whole of the Egyptian army. It is little wonder that such anger and resentment have mounted. The British had taken their arms from Omdurman and sent them via Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope. This is the secret behind stripping the Egyptian soldiers in Sudan of their weapons, weapons that are not the property of the British but of the Egyptian crown."

That *Al-Ahram* put its finger on the true cause behind the "incident of the soldiers" is supported by the private papers of Sir Reginald Wingate, who had just taken up office as governor-general of Sudan only a month earlier. Wingate relates that, on 23 January 1900, the 14th battalion of the Egyptian army had rioted and raided an arms depot in Omdurman. The only way the British commanders could re-exert their control was to threaten that a large British force was on its way to the Sudanese capital to suppress them. According to Wingate, Egyptian officers in the Sudanese battalion had incited the rioting, in protest against the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899, against pay reductions and against rumours that, after their victory in Sudan, they would be transferred to South Africa to take part in the Boer War.

Al-Ahram's suspicions were further confirmed by a report by a journalist who is believed to be a German residing in

136 In March 1900 Khedive Abbas Helmi II expelled seven Egyptian army officers for their part in a minor mutiny in Omdurman after soldiers were stripped of their weapons. In this instalment of his chronicle of modern Egyptian history as seen through the pages of *Al-Ahram*, Dr Yuman Labib Rizq looks at a relatively unknown chapter in Egyptian history



Illustration: Makram Henen

Egypt", as the palace confidant Ahmed Shafiq wrote in his memoirs. The report, which Shafiq says "distressed the khedive for several days due to the salient truths it revealed", said that the actions of the Egyptian soldiers merited praise, not punishment. They were just in their demands that their salaries should not be reduced to less than that of British officers. "Is the skin of an Egyptian worth less than the skin of an Englishman?" he asks. Moreover, the condemned soldiers did no more than to protest "the pillaging of Egyptian arms for use in South Africa. Yet you [the British] did nothing to punish the thieves!" Undoubtedly the German journalist's passionate defence of the Egyptian officers, "whose names should be etched on brass plaques in commemoration of their glorious patriotic deed", was motivated by German antagonism toward the British over the Boer War.

Having sensed these truths, *Al-Ahram*'s position was markedly different to that of *Al-Muqattam*, the Arabic-language mouthpiece for the British occupation. On 3 February, beneath the headline "The Affair of the Soldiers", *Al-Ahram* commented, "Some (referring to *Al-Muqattam*) refer to the incident as 'mutinous', in spite of the fact that it is really a question of the soldiers pressing for their rightful demands after extreme and unjustified demands. These are the Egyptian soldiers who were victorious in Sudan. Yet they have received no promotion and no increase in pay. They are ordered to strip their commanding officers to perform the ignominious task of stripping them of their arms and ammunition."

The demand for just and equitable treatment voiced in *Al-Ahram* had, in fact, been submitted in writing to the sirdar by Abdel-Gawad Bey, commander of the fifth regiment. However, Abdel-Gawad was ordered to retract his petition, which "deeply

distressed and embittered his fellow soldiers and colleagues."

After having fought and won an arduous battle, constructed the railroads, built the governor's palace and the officers' club, "when the time came to hand out promotions and awards, the Egyptian soldiers had to stand by as others were rewarded". This sentiment, expressed in *Al-Ahram*, was shared by other newspapers: *Al-Mu'ayyid*, Egypt's first nationalist newspaper, and the recently launched *Al-Liwa*, which took the occasion to assert that the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement, which gave the British virtual control over Sudan while Egypt retained only nominal sovereignty, was little less than a catastrophe.

Indeed, from the moment it was signed, this arrangement for the dual administration of Sudan had precipitated growing disillusionment among Egyptian officers stationed in Sudan. A group of them formed a secret society called *Al-Murwada* (Amity) that began to correspond with prominent Egyptian politicians and the khedive himself, expressing their dissatisfaction with British policy in Sudan. At the same time, the offices of *Al-Mu'ayyid* and *Al-Liwa* were flooded with letters complaining of the circumstances of Egyptian officers in Sudan. The information that they revealed and the fact that they were unsigned suggest that the authors were the self-same officers.

Al-Ahram unequivocally aligned itself with the nationalist position. To *Al-Ahram*, the "affair of the soldiers", as it insisted on referring to the incident in Omdurman, was clearly an instance of legitimate resistance. Whenever possible, it refused allegations of mutiny, as was the case in an article that appeared on 7 February 1900: "The Egyptian soldiers and their officers in Sudan are not rebels or mutineers. They are distressed by the fact that they have

been stripped of the weapons for no sound reason, leaving them soldiers without arms, as though they were children gathered in the street to play football. If we were to picture those 20,000 soldiers stripped of their arms, we ourselves would be sorely troubled. Therein lies the source of agitation, but not rebellion or mutiny."

The rift over how to interpret the incident in Omdurman reached the pinnacles of power, pitting the palace against the British high commissioner. On 10 February, Lord Cromer met with the Egyptian prime minister and asked him to advise the khedive to issue a decree declaring the Egyptian officers rebels. Abbas II refused. To *Al-Ahram* the British demand stank of "pure politics", to which the palace refused to yield. Instead, Abbas responded, "I have therefore asked the sirdar to relay to all officers and soldiers my command to abide by the law."

This formula was unacceptable to Wingate. He asked the high commissioner in Cairo to seek a more harshly worded decree in which the officers would be declared mutineers. Abbas yielded to British pressure and issued a second decree, which *Al-Ahram* described as "more strongly worded than the first, although it still does not accuse the officers of mutiny". Lord Cromer was still dissatisfied, and perhaps in answer to *Al-Ahram*'s prayers that "political manoeuvring over this issue would cease", the khedive dispatched a telegram to the sirdar in Omdurman that would ultimately settle matters.

In his telegram, the khedive expressed his regret over the fact that the rebelliousness that was exhibited by some soldiers had not yet been resolved. He hoped that the sirdar would exercise his utmost wisdom in managing the affair and that the investigations would be conducted with exacting thoroughness. As for those officers who were charged with mutiny, they should be tried before a military tribunal in accordance with the military code.

In so writing, according to *Al-Ahram*, "the khedive has deferred the accusation of mutiny to the investigatory process", which brings us to the final phase in this chapter — the trial.

After deliberations with all the regiments, it was decided to form an investigatory board made up of a majority of Egyptian officers and chaired by a British officer, Brigadier General Jackson. The board also included the commander of the fifth regiment, General Ferguson, and four Egyptian brigadiers. The composition of the board inspired confidence in Egyptian public opinion. "No doubt the sirdar was careful to compose the board in this manner, so as to convey to the army his good intentions and clear conscience," commented *Al-Ahram*.

For a period of 10 days, there was a curious silence in the press over the trial. Then on 26 February, *Al-Ahram* published the Special Military Order Promulgated in Omdurman.

This 10-day news blackout before sen-

tencing informs us both of the speed with which military trials took place and of the secrecy in which they were conducted. The ruling itself used the term "insubordination", a purely military term that fell short of accusation of "mutiny" claimed for by the pro-occupation newspapers. It was further noted in *Al-Ahram* that the board's rulings "received the full approval of the government of His Royal Highness the Khedive".

The individual sentences against the officers themselves read more like a massacre. Captain Mohamed Effendi Mukhtar of the 14th Sudanese battalion was held "directly responsible for the insubordination that occurred in his battalion, and the board unanimously rules to discharge this officer from the service of His Royal Highness the Khedive". First Lieutenant Mustafa Effendi Lutfi of the same battalion received the same sentence. However, with regard to Second Lieutenant Ahmed Effendi Shaker, the board advised clemency, "in view of his youth and inexperience".

Moving to the 11th Sudanese battalion, Captain Hassan Effendi Labib was held to be the "major offender" and therefore discharged. Corporal Bulal El-Nur was sentenced to be "stripped of his rank, placed in the disciplinary block for a period determined by His Royal Highness the Khedive and afterwards dishonourably discharged".

From the eighth infantry battalion, First Lieutenant Saleh Effendi Zaki was discharged and Second Lieutenant Mustafa Effendi Mohamed El-Shami's name had to be "placed at the bottom of the list of seniority in the rank of second lieutenant".

Two days later, a second set of rulings was pronounced against other officers found guilty of insubordination. Captain Mohamed Effendi Helmi was put on pension and First Lieutenant Mohamed Effendi Tawfiq and second lieutenants Abdel-Hamid Effendi Shukri and Idris Effendi Abdallah were discharged.

In the wake of this incident, British army authorities had to devise measures in order to ensure discipline within the ranks. Evidently their policy of "divide and conquer" within the army was unsuccessful. The "insubordination" proved that, even though Egyptian officers were put in charge of Sudanese regiments in the hopes that separate language and culture would keep them apart, the Sudanese soldiers obeyed their Egyptian officers when they were instructed to raid the arms depot. At the same time, the British wanted to ensure that the sentences against the officers would be a deterrent against future acts of insubordination. Hence, the khedive's summoning of the condemned officers to Abdeen to castigate them personally.

The author is a professor of history and head of Al-Ahram History Studies Centre.



A government decision banning the cultivation of rice in many areas of Egypt has left farmers anxious about their future, reports Reem Leila

Reem Leila



No longer able to sow their wild oats — or rice, in this case, farmers are fuming about a government ban on rice production in some areas *photo: Saad Fagg El-Nour*

Abdel-Hadi Radi, minister of public works and water resources, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that Egypt's quota of the Nile's water is 5.5 billion cubic metres. This

The government plans gradually to reduce rice-cultivating land to 700,000 feddans by the year 2000. Those who violate the decree will face a fine of LE400 per feddan of illegal rice crop and 10 piastres for each cubic metre of water used to irrigate the rice.

Abdel-Wahab Ghazi, head of the Irrigation Department at the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources, also explained the reasons for the ban. "Egypt's

Egypt's 1995 rice harvest was estimated at 4.8 million tons, compared to 4.5 million tons for the year before. Wheat and corn are expected production to decrease dramatically after the new drought comes into effect. But Saeed, in the head of the Agricultural Research Centre, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture, disagrees. Reducing the area of land cultivating rice, he said, does not mean at all that production will be reduced. The Ministry of Agriculture will increase the productivity rate of each feddan from 240 tons to nearly 344 tons by using new kinds of fertilisers, he explained.

In a visit conducted by *Al-Ahram Weekly*

Ibrahim Khallaf is a farmer who is worried about his land. "I cannot stop cultivating rice. The salinity of my land is very high. Cultivating rice washes the land. If I stopped, the land would be de-

According to Salah Abdel-Wanees of the Ministry of Agriculture the country's welfare is much more important than that of individuals'. Those banned from cultivating rice have been told to grow maize instead. "Maize is nearly as profitable as rice, since it does not need as much water as rice," said Abdel-Wanees. "Talk about farmers not being able to pay their debts is

Soliman El-Astry, a rice wholesaler, believes that decreasing the area of land cultivated by rice will increase rice prices in the domestic market and deprive the treasury of the money gained from exporting the rice harvest's surplus. El-Astry expects that rice prices will increase by not less than 20 per cent. "The private sector will rush ahead and put huge quantities of rice into storage in order to control its price. I think the government has to find a solution to this problem," he said.

Despite holding some reservations against the text of the agreement, Zorba still believed that the EU is an investment in the future since it will eliminate the cost of customs which would give Egypt, as a partner in the agreement, a comparative advantage over competition.

EAB share sale

IN A MOVE designed to increase its capital by 20 per cent, the Egyptian-American Bank (EAB) placed two million shares for sale to the public on July 2. The sale of the shares is expected to add LE20 million to the bank's current LE100 million in capital. One quarter of the shares will be earmarked for the bank's employees while the rest is for the public.

According to Karim Ousey, senior manager of EAB's Retail Banking and Communications Department, the increase in total equity will allow the bank to expand its loan portfolio. In addition, it will increase the bank's "single obligator limit", which raises its ceiling on loans to a single entity. Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) regulations stipulate that the single obligator limit should not exceed 25 per cent of the total equity.

"Going public," said Ousey, "goes hand-in-hand with the government's privatisation programme."

Each share will be priced at LE60, with a minimum of 50 shares per purchase required. Public subscription is scheduled to continue for a month but, if the offering is fully covered, subscription will be closed after 10 days.

The EAB, which has a paid-up capital of LE100 million, is jointly owned by the Bank of Alexandria (51 per cent) and the Amex Holdings Corporation (49 per cent).

Vacation-land

RECENT statistics reveal that Egypt's tourism revenues witnessed an increase for fiscal year 1995-1996. According to an economic report published by the Central Bank of Egypt, the country's tourism revenues reached \$1.7-billion during the period from July to December of fiscal year 1995-1996, a 30.4 per cent increase over the revenue from same period the year before.

The number of tourists also increased during that same period, reaching, according to the report, 1.8 million, an increase of 19.6 per cent. Most of this increase took place last October and November when Cairo played host to several international tourist conferences. This increase included tourists from European countries, especially France, Italy, England and Germany. The number of tourist from Eastern Europe, especially Russia, also witnessed a marked increase. About 108,000 Russian tourists came to Cairo, compared to 61,000 in the same period last year, the report said.

In addition, 26.5 per cent more tourists from the Americas and 22.2 per cent from Asia chose Egypt as a vacation spot this fiscal year.

The number of tourist nights reached 12.5 million during the period from July to December 1995-1996, an increase of 28.4 per cent over the same period last year, the report said.

Visitors from European countries topped the list in terms of the number of tourist nights, surpassing last year's figure by 82.1 per cent. Visitors from the Americas spent 41.1 per cent more tourist nights this year than last, and tourists from Asia and the Pacific rim countries spent 44.3 per cent more tourist nights in the country this fiscal year.

Italy backs artisans

ITALIAN Ambassador Francesco Aloisi de Lardero met with the president of the Artisans' Syndicate, Ahmed Abdel-Kader Ghannima, on the occasion of the completion of the joint Italian-Egyptian professional training centre for woodworkers.

The project's goal is to provide young Egyptian students with the knowledge and technical skills necessary to successfully enter the labour market. After completing their training, selected students will be placed in firms operating in the field of wood production.

The cooperation project is part of the Italian government's general plan to fight unemployment and promote the private sector in Egypt.

A \$3.4 million grant from the Italian government was used for the centre's construction and teacher training.

In the future, the syndicate will manage the centre's courses which are expected to draw nearly 200 students annually.

Walking with Arafat

On 27 June, Benjamin Netanyahu's chief political advisor, Dore Gold, met "secretly" in Gaza with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. It was the first direct encounter between the new Israeli government and the PLO leader. The next day — in a bevy of interviews granted to the Israeli press — Netanyahu declared that he would open "channels of communication at all levels" with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), including Arafat "if it is important for the state of Israel".

The meeting and Netanyahu's comments were viewed in Israel as the first cracks in the quarantine imposed by the Israeli government on Arafat since the elections. As Shimon Peres warned Netanyahu in his first Knesset speech as opposition leader, "I am not ashamed to say I walked with Arafat. You will too". The new Israeli leader is likely to walk slowly but walk nevertheless, and for the same motives that drove Rabin to shake Arafat's hand and Peres, at times, to hold it peace, and the complex relation peace has with Israel's notion of security.

The Gold-Arafat meeting was prompted, say sources, less by Arafat's chagrin that he was being ignored by the Israeli government in favour of his deputy Mahmoud Abbas, with whom Gold had met earlier, than by reports from Israel's security forces of "a deterioration in cooperation" between them and their PNA counterparts since Netanyahu assumed office.

On 13 June, leaks surfaced in the Israeli media that

Security concerns dominated the first direct yet low-key encounter in Gaza between PLO leader Yasser Arafat and the new Israeli government, writes **Graham Usher** from Jerusalem

The PNA's Preventive Security chiefs in the West Bank and Gaza, Jibril Rajoub and Mohamed Dahlan, had warned the Israeli government that, should it "suspend" its cooperation with them and Arafat, they might "suspend" their persecution of Hamas.

Rajoub later denied the reports, insisting that, "under Arafat's orders", the PNA would continue the same security policy as existed prior to the elections. But the message was understood. On 26 June, Netanyahu ordered the resumption of Israel-PNA security contacts at the local, district and regional levels in Gaza and the West Bank. The next day he dispatched Gold to meet Arafat.

In Gaza, Gold reportedly assured Arafat of the Israeli government's commitment to the peace process, promising meetings between the PLO leader and senior cabinet ministers, including Netanyahu, "when necessary".

But he also listed alleged PNA violations of the Oslo agreements which must be corrected if the process is to resume. Chief of these, according to Netanyahu, is for the PNA to demonstrate its recent "clear capacity" to combat Hamas and Islamic Jihad, not "ephemerally", but as "a matter of course".

The notion that the PNA's hunt after its Islamist opposition is either "recent" or "ephemeral" is certainly news to Palestinians. Nor only to them. On 18 June, Amnesty International published its annual report for 1995. And the chapter on Israel reveals just how little difference the Israeli-PNA driven policy of "peace with security" has made to Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli security forces, says Amnesty, continued to hold up to 4,000 Palestinian political prisoners during 1995, used "systematic torture" in their interrogations of detainees and killed 49 Palestinians, including several "in circumstances suggesting they had been extra-judicially executed". The only novelty about the report is that these absolute violations of Palestinians' human rights have been compounded by the PNA. In 1995, the PNA, says Amnesty, also arrested upwards of 1,000 Palestinians in the self-rule areas, "many without charge or trial", and was responsible for the death of four Palestinians while in its custody.

Since the report was written — and especially with the PNA's mass arrest sweeps that followed the suicide attacks in Israel, these abuses have worsened.

The PNA has currently in its prisons anywhere between 900 and 1,200 detainees, many of them interned without legal warrant or judicial scrutiny. Ex-detainees tell of appalling prison conditions with "poor food, no medical treatment and no access to the outdoors".

One ex-detainee from Gaza (who, typically, refused to be identified) describes how he was beaten with cables stuffed with wires every day for 18 days. "In the end I confessed I was a member of Hamas' military wing," he says. "I know others who confessed their wives were Hamas members. We would have confessed to anything".

The saddest result of the PNA's ruthless adoption of Israel's security priorities is how little protest they have caused, whether on the Palestinian street or, more culpably, within an increasingly pliant Palestinian media. But there are signs that the situation may be changing.

On 26 June, the head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights, Dr Eyad Sarraj, was released after spending 16 days in PNA custody. For Sarraj's lawyer, Khader Shkirat, the fact that the PNA quietly dropped the "drugs"

and "assault" charges brought against his client vindicates the view that the real cause behind Sarraj's detention was his outspoken criticism of the PNA's human rights record.

But, says Shkirat, the release would not have occurred had it not been for the Palestinian High Court demanding from the PNA the reasons for Sarraj's arrest, pressure exerted on Arafat by members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and a handful of Palestinian non-governmental organisations which raised Sarraj's case publicly. A similar coalition is being built to demand the release of 10 Palestinian students from Birzeit University who have been detained in PNA prisons without charges or trial for over 100 days. The Palestinian High court has requested a written explanation from the PNA's interior minister as to why the students are still being held. The PNA's interior minister is Yasser Arafat.

The Gold meeting and the Palestinian High Court's rulings reveal precisely Arafat's dilemma in the new Likud era. On the one hand, the PLO leader may be convinced that the only way he can proceed towards statehood is by demonstrating to Likud (as he demonstrated to Labour) that he and the PNA are "sound" on Israel's security policies. On the other — and as long as he bases the PNA's security policies exclusively on these needs — the struggle in the self-rule areas is likely to be less for a state than about the kind of state it is.

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Peace stalemate spells Lebanese disaster

The fate of South Lebanon remains hostage to regional developments and the upcoming American elections, reports **Zeina Khodr** from Beirut

The region is at a dangerous crossroads with Israel's new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holding on to his hard-line peace policies and the Arabs insisting Israel must respect the principle of exchanging land for peace. The current stalemate in the Middle East peace process bodes ill for Lebanon which, when things go wrong in the region, often pays the price.

The dramatic political changes in the region may have far-reaching repercussions. Arab-Israeli peace negotiations are frozen and the possibility of them resuming in the near future seem remote. The current stalemate makes Lebanon, particularly the south, the biggest loser.

Emile Khoury, a columnist in the conservative daily *Al-Nahar*, predicted five possibilities if the stalemate continues: "Either the peace process will be frozen and Lebanon will have to bear the consequences of the stalemate which will be reflected in the situation in the south. The region would enter a state of 'no war, no peace' which would please Israel since it will continue to occupy Arab lands and expand settlements. The cycle of violence and ex-

termism may increase in the area, deteriorating the regional security situation. Resistance activities against Israel in the south and attacks inside Israel proper might escalate prompting Netanyahu to carry out a large scale military operation. Or Arab unity may result in internal division in Israel and lead to the collapse of the present hardline government."

Meanwhile, the military situation in southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa continues to deteriorate in spite of the April ceasefire understanding.

Israeli warplanes rocketed a base belonging to the anti-Arafat Palestinian National Liberation Organisation in the eastern Bekaa Valley, just seven kilometres away from the Syrian border. The group, headed by former Fatah Colonel Abu Moussa, had claimed responsibility for an attack which killed three Israeli soldiers in the West Bank last week. Days earlier, the resistance carried out eight attacks in one day against Israeli troops and their allied militia in the zone they occupy in South Lebanon. Israel responded by shelling a number of villages in the south.

The escalation raises the question of how the Likud government will deal with Lebanon. Western sources were quoted by the local press as saying that an Israeli military strike is eminent in the next few months while others ruled out the possibility until after the American elections in November.

According to Ghassan Mukkhal, the head of the international desk at the leftist daily *Al-Safir*, the region is passing through a wait-and-see period until Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu maps out a clear policy. "I do not think Israel will carry out a large-scale attack against Lebanon at the present. Netanyahu has no clear-cut policy yet. We are all waiting to find out what it is, especially vis-à-vis Lebanon which he has not talked much about. We also have to wait for the American elections and maybe only after they are held will Netanyahu declare his true policy."

Commenting on the flare-up in the south, the American ambassador to Lebanon, Richard Jones, said he anticipated more violence despite a call for calm. "I think the situation in the south is very serious. I don't think violence in the south benefits any of the parties' inter-

ests. But this is a disagreement we've had for some time and I expect unfortunately that it will continue. The situation will become clearer after Netanyahu's visit to Washington next week," he said.

Speculation has been floating around in the local media for the past week about a possible surprise Israeli pull-out from South Lebanon and the western Bekaa. This scenario, which has been reportedly on the negotiating table in the United States, ultimately aims at cornering Syria.

This proposal was supposedly propounded to the American administration by a research institution in the US before former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated last November when Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations were deadlocked. The aim was to corner Syria and take away its trump card — South Lebanon [Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon]. It would be an attractive option for Israel. Netanyahu will be able to build an image of a peacemaker and Israel will be able to achieve its long-time goal — to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations with Israel," according

to a local daily.

But most observers here do not believe a surprise withdrawal will take place. "Israel has the problem of finding some sort of arrangement for its proxy militia in the south, the so-called South Lebanon Army. They cannot just withdraw and abandon them. Israel also has to worry about its security," Rajah Khoury, a columnist said.

Mukkhal also down played the speculation of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, saying that Israel will not leave without anything in return. "Talk of a surprise Israeli withdrawal is nonsense for many reasons. The Likud government considers a pull-out an important card in negotiations with Syria. It just won't leave without any benefits. Israel won't withdraw without an agreement with Lebanon and Syria because it wants security guarantees not just promises. Also, a pull-out without a peace treaty or some kind of agreement would spell victory for the resistance movement. It would make Syria's position in the Arab world strong since it succeeded to liberate land without making any concessions to Israel."

Whether or not reports of an Israeli pull-out are founded, it is highly unlikely that any major development will occur before the November elections in the United States. The Netanyahu government must also make clear its stance because if it insists on its hardline position, it may destroy the peace process. This Israeli intransigence is being confronted by extensive inter-Arab contacts.

The Arabs are stressing the peace process must remain based on the principle of exchanging land for peace. Netanyahu has ruled out exchanging land for peace and called for talks without prior conditions. "Negotiations with Israel will not resume unless they are based on the land for peace formula," Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz said.

The upcoming period is expected to be precarious. The fate of the five-year old Arab-Israeli peace process will be determined in the wake of the decisions and policies adopted by the concerned parties in the near future. In the interim, South Lebanon will remain hostage to regional developments and the upcoming American elections.



The remains of a shelled Palestinian guerrilla base in southeast Lebanon

Turkey's shifting bedfellows

Turkey's moderate Islamic force is a hair's breadth away from power, writes **Samia Nkrumah**

On 8 July the Turkish parliament will decide the fate of its first Islamic prime minister. Barring a no confidence vote, Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Refah), will head a coalition government for the next two years.

But all is not well with Refah's partner, the right-wing True Path Party (DYP) headed by Tansu Ciller, who is now deputy prime minister and foreign minister in the Refah-DYP coalition. In two years' time, she is set to become prime minister under a four-year rotating premiership. But this prospect now looks uncertain.

This week, the Turkish media, dominated by secularists, was rife with speculation that the DYP members of parliament opposed to the coalition deal will block the newly formed government's rise to power. So far, eight DYP deputies have resigned from the party in protest at Ciller's deal with the Islamists, and around 20 more are opposed to the new coalition.

A number of DYP rejectionists have defected to former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP) whose own coalition with the DYP stopped after only 100 days in office due to the personal rivalry between Ciller and Yilmaz.

Refah and the DYP have 288 seats in parliament (158 and 134 seats respectively). If the number of defections increases, the balance could further tip in favour of the rejectionists.

There are other forces to be reckoned with. The Grand Unity Party (BBP) with seven seats in parliament could be instrumental in blocking the confidence vote. The BBP is an ultra-nationalist block known for its pro-Refah tendencies, but it opposes shelving corruption probes against Ciller. The BBP will back the government if its members are promised certain positions. This would only further strain the coalition.

As things stand, "deputies in the 550-seat parliament are evenly divided between those who support the newly formed government and those who oppose it", wrote the *Turkish Daily News*. Against these threatening obstacles to

his rise to power, it is little wonder that Erbakan is treading carefully. When revealing the coalition government's programme, he conspicuously left out Refah's vehement criticisms of Turkey's pro-Western stance.

In the aftermath of the coalition deal, Erbakan's statements could hardly be distinguished from those of the secular parties. Recently, Erbakan has not reiterated his dream of an Islamic common market, his pledge to scrap interest rates or his intention to review Turkey's customs union agreement with the European Union.

Erbakan's compromising stance indicates that his assumption of power does not imply an end to secularism in Turkey. Rather, it spells the rise of a moderate, democratic religious party. It is this very moderateness which helped him win the largest share of votes in last December's elections in spite of the secular tendencies of the mighty military and financial forces. Secularists and pro-Westerners will take heart at his apparent about-turn, hoping that it will be easier to control the Islamists in a coalition government than as a political opposition. The DYP will act as a buffer against Refah's ambitions for closer ties with the Islamic world and steer the administration closer to its traditional Western allies.

For Ciller, entering a coalition with Refah was a question of political survival. When negotiating a coalition deal, Ciller asked Erbakan to halt the corruption charges which parliamentary committees are filing against her. Standing before the Supreme Court would put an end to Ciller's political career. It remains to be seen whether Erbakan will grant her this reprieve. After all, it was Refah, backed by the ANAP, which launched charges of corruption against Ciller.

Erbakan knows that he is taking a risk. His party fought on an anti-corruption platform. Many Refah supporters are not happy to see Ciller sharing power with their leaders. It was reported that Ciller received parcels stuffed with *niqabs* (headscarves) through the post.

But being the shrewd politician that he is, Erbakan is aware of his party's strong

points. The Islamists will control the labour, housing, justice, agriculture, culture and finance ministries. In this way, Refah will continue to do what it does best: appeal to the poor by maintaining its grip on the social service networks it promoted. Erbakan also announced that his government is committed to setting up a just taxation system.

However, by abandoning key cabinet positions such as defence, interior and foreign affairs, Refah has made unavoidable yet important concessions.

Erbakan's recent audiously vague statements allow for more than one interpretation. His government will respect strategic treaties signed by Turkey except those deemed to be against the country's "national and security interests". Yet Refah has publicly opposed the military pact signed with Israel last February as well as the US-led multinational force based in southeast Turkey to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq.

This year Turkey has stepped up its attack on Kurds in northern Iraq. Last week, Turkish troops killed dozens of Kurdish guerrillas in a cross-border raid against a rebel base in northern Iraq. In response, the Kurdish Workers Party carried out its first suicide bombing this week, killing nine soldiers in a ceremonial parade in Tunceli.

Knowing that the military has the final say on Ankara's Kurdish policy, the Refah leader conceded that "the state's fight against separatist terrorism will continue with all its vigour". A seasoned political veteran who served in a previous government that was overthrown by the generals cannot afford to appear antagonistic. Erbakan knows that the military is watching him closely.

At the same time, Erbakan is keen to stress that Turks and Kurds are all Muslims and that he will try to resolve the problems through "Islamic fraternity". Like his predecessor Yilmaz, he has pledged a gradual lifting of the state of emergency in the southeast of the country. He will let the DYP, which controls the defence and interior portfolios, tackle the complex issues like social order and human rights.

Should the Arab world start worrying

lest Erbakan reneges on his earlier statements to review the Turkish-Israeli military pact and improve Turkey's relations with the Islamic world? Turkey is ethnically and geographically connected to Iraq, Iran and Syria. Refah's conciliatory statements during the campaign days have already earned the approval of its Islamic and Arab neighbours. The Syrian daily *Tishrin* said that Damascus was ready to resolve the problems straining its ties with Turkey under Erbakan's leadership.

But political analysts agree that Turkish reality means that the secularist principles on which the republic were built 75 years ago cannot be abandoned — at least not overnight. "The concessions Refah and the DYP made were their only means to attain power. Erbakan's about-turn could be viewed as an act of political manoeuvring," said Ahmed Fuad Metwally, professor of Turkish studies at Ain Shams University in Cairo.

But Refah has not risen to the centre of power from a vacuum. It has capitalised on the right's failure to deliver economically. Turkey's crippling debts, mounting inflation and rising unemployment gave him an opening.

Secularism exists side by side with a strong Muslim tradition, which is noticed in small towns and villages, the focus of Refah's campaign. "Around 99 per cent of its population is Muslim. As in all non-Arab Islamic countries, Turks are strongly attached to their religion. Yet every member of parliament has to swear on oath to protect democracy and secularism, the principles of Turkey's first republic. On Turkish identity cards only the word Turkish appears; there is no mention of religion or ethnic background," said Metwally.

The stage is set for a dangerous battle of wills in the Turkish corridors of power. Erbakan's campaign promises may turn out to be mere rhetoric, or he may be waiting until he is secure at the helm before showing his true colours. In the meantime, the Arab world waits hopefully and the West looks on cautiously as Turkey remains entangled in the ever shifting coalitions of its conflicting political forces.

KURASAT ISTRATIJIYA (38)

Three Regional Spheres in Iran's Foreign Policy

Dr. Walid M. Abdel Nasser

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The word from Sri Lanka is that Kumaratunga is on talking terms with her island nation's Tamils, but not with its Tigers, writes **Gamal Nkrumah** from Colombo

Several of the connected African countries already have local/nodal points to access information highways. For example, in Zimbabwe, the Mango network groups together 200 non-government organisations, researchers, and universities. In Kenya, Aarenet links 150 university departments, United Nations agencies, government departments and non-government organisations to the rest of the world. Padisnet in Ethiopia allows the 36 member states of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa to communicate with each other.

G7

Lyon from Colombo

The G7 leaders, at loggerheads over what to do with the world's poor at Lyon, created disquiet in the Third World, warns **Gamal Nkrumah**

The leaders of the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy — the so-called G7 — will go down in history as being notorious for their meanness. The seven-nation summit sidestepped the issues of poverty and debt relief for poor countries altogether. "Unto everyone that hath shall be given. He that hath not will have to wait further discussion," the *Financial Times* succinctly put it, paraphrasing a biblical adage and summing up the G7 leaders' frame of mind. It was ironic, because the growth of Third World economies stimulates demand for machinery and equipment from the industrialised world.

The new international world order seems designed to stop the down-and-out least developed countries from reaching out for the crumbs that fall off the tables of the well-to-do. Lending a helping hand to the up-and-coming newly industrialised nations was also out of the question. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Germany vetoed any reference in the final communiqué of the G7 summit to a proposal by French President Jacques Chirac to sell \$2 billion in international gold reserves to finance part of the debt relief for the world's least developed countries — mainly former French colonies in Africa. Cold water was poured over Chirac's notion of turning Lyon into a "development summit".

The proposal was not entirely Chirac's idea. Earlier in the year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered to sell \$2 billion of its \$40 billion gold reserves for reinvestment in Third World countries. "We do not want to discuss the sale of gold reserves," said Chancellor Kohl. The Germans seem to be riding high on a winning streak. In London they won the 1996 European Soccer Championships and in Lyon they threatened to muster a 15 per cent

blocking vote among the IMF's board of directors. An 85 per cent majority vote on the IMF board is necessary for the sale of the Bretton Woods institutions' gold reserves.

Japan's unemployment rate rose to an unprecedented 3.5 per cent last month. That is nothing in comparison to France's which stood at the near-record figure of 13 per cent last week. The spectre of millions of Third World illegal immigrants literally smuggled across continents and scores of international borders suggests even higher rates of unemployment in the South. The phenomenon is symptomatic of the radical changes taking place the world over — namely globalisation.

Human smuggling is one of the most lucrative criminal activities in the contemporary world. Sri Lanka is a country that springs to mind when the issue is raised. The export of Sri Lankan manpower, or one may more accurately say womanpower, is the Indian Ocean island nation's single most lucrative net foreign exchange earner. In 1995, exporting Sri Lankan womanpower brought in no less than 42 billion rupees (\$1.5 billion). "Earnings from housemaids employed in the Middle East alone were greater than the net income earned from the export of garments," disclosed the chairman of the Foreign Employment Bureau, Colonel Nissanka N Wijeratne, recently.

Clothing and garments are Sri Lanka's main export earners, followed by tea, rubber, copra and precious stones. Wijeratne added, "While [Sri Lankan] housemaids in the Middle East remitted 21 billion rupees worth of hard currency last year, the net remittances earned from garment exports were 20 billion rupees." Most garment factory workers are women, as are the tea pluckers in the island's plantations.



Summit sidetracks aid

Youssef Boutros Ghali regrets the sad fact that the G7 summiteers postponed tackling the Third World's pressing economic problems, writes **Ghada Ragab**

Despite strong demands by Third World countries, especially Egypt, that the G7 meetings assign more importance to economic assistance for the poorer nations of the world, issues including terrorism, trade sanctions and Bosnia took priority at the summit held in Lyon last week.

The importance of a concerted effort, led by the G7, to prevent the marginalisation of a large number of poor countries, particularly in Africa, at a time when the global economy is moving faster towards integration, was highlighted in the summit's preparatory meetings.

Representing Egypt and the Third World, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Youssef Boutros Ghali warned that delayed action on the economic problems of Africa could have a far-reaching global impact.

"The African continent is in need of a concerted programme sponsored simultaneously by the G7, the Bretton Woods institutions, the Paris Club, the United Nations and bilateral donors to address all dimensions of poverty and underdevelopment," Ghali said.

"Our task, that of the G7 and international institutions in which the G7 are major stockholders, is to ensure that nowhere in the 21st century do we lose irrevocably part of our planet to misery, disease, famine and a life of endless hardship and suffering," he added.

Minister Ghali called for the maintenance and expansion of existing mechanisms to channel assistance to the Third World, the continuation of development assistance from donor countries where budgetary considerations stand in the way of aid programmes and establishing mechanisms to resolve the debt crisis.

Although fixed on the agenda of the summit, development assistance and the resolution of the economic problems plaguing the Third World took a back seat to issues which have a more direct impact on the G7 countries.

The bombing of the US military complex in Saudi Arabia pushed terrorism to the top of the summit's agenda. The US came under fire from other nations for enacting legislation that would penalise non-US companies for dealing with Cuba, Iran and Libya. US Japanese trade disputes hung over the summit. Close to home, Bosnia commanded the attention of the European G7 members as they called upon donor countries to increase and accelerate their contributions to the war-torn country.

In the meantime, discussions on Third World economic assistance were sidetracked. Canada suggested selling off five million ounces of International Monetary Fund gold stock over a five-year period to fund \$1 billion in loans to poor countries. But Germany, concerned over an adverse reaction at home against such a measure at a time when tensions are high over the cost of monetary union, stood steadfastly against the idea.

Neither would the G7 agree on how much in debt relief to grant and their message to the Paris Club to increase the ceiling on debt relief was a weak one.

Furthermore, anticipating reactions from their home constituencies on why they should be alone in helping out the poorer countries of the world at a time of rampant unemployment, the G7 urged Asian and other emerging countries to take on a share of the burden.

Japan for Ghali

At the recent G7 summit in Lyon, Japan pledged its support for Boutros Ghali's re-election. **Mansour Abul-Azm** in Tokyo finds out why

The economic summit of the seven richest countries in the world (G7) which was held last month in Lyon, France, was seen as an opportunity for United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to examine his chances of being re-elected.

Some of the G7 leaders, notably United States President Bill Clinton, had reservations about Ghali continuing for a second term after this December. Other G7 nations, notably France and Japan, the UN's main financier after the US, pledged their support for him. Most Third World countries back Ghali since he is the first African and Arab to head the international body.

The US was once a supporter of Ghali. But that changed when the UN secretary-general published a report condemning Israel for deliberately carrying out the Qana massacre of Lebanese civilians earlier this year. His relationship with the US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright, has never been good. They were trading insults long before the Americans made their decision to stop backing Ghali's re-election plans.

Most of the participating countries in the summit enthusiastically acclaimed the achievements of Ghali during his six years in office. Despite its well known opposition to his re-election, the US acknowledged his accomplishment in reforming and restructuring the UN and its worldwide peace operations.

Japanese support for Ghali's re-election is important. Although Japan is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the country is trying hard to secure a more active and influential political role for itself. Japan's economic success is well known; it has the second biggest

economy in the world — second only to the US.

Tokyo aspires to have a louder voice in the international arena and in settlements of regional disputes. Recently, it has granted large amounts of aid to the Palestinians following the Palestinian-Israeli Oslo accords, assisted in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and offered to send teams to participate in preserving peace in places like the Golan Heights.

Boutros Ghali's relationship with Japan goes back to the '70s when he first visited the country as a minister in the Egyptian government. Since then Ghali has made a trip to Japan every year and on each occasion asks the country to increase its involvement in international activities. He has personally tried to calm the fears of conservative Japanese politicians about a more dynamic participation by their country in international activities.

It is clear that Japan has become emboldened during Ghali's years in office, shedding anxieties about being involved in international politics that have controlled its actions since its defeat in World War II. Since Boutros Ghali became UN secretary-general at the beginning of the '90s, Japan has contributed for the first time to international peacekeeping operations and passed a law allowing its military units to participate in UN operations in conflict zones.

Ghali and Japan are both keen on more Japanese politicians being given influential offices in the UN's agencies and departments. Japan feels it deserves a permanent position in the Security Council and there will be no better way of achieving such a goal than to make sure that Ghali remains at the helm of the UN.

War criminal quits office

RADOVAN Karadzic bowed to international pressure and formally stepped aside as Bosnian Serb leader on Monday, turning his powers over to a hardline nationalist deputy, Biljana Plavcic, who has long supported his policies. But it appeared likely that Karadzic would try to continue wielding power from behind the scenes.

Carl Bildt, the international envoy to Bosnia, had threatened to re-impose sanctions on the Bosnian Serbs unless Karadzic was removed from power by last Monday. The international community has been pressing for Karadzic to resign from office and hand himself in to the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague to be tried for war crimes charges.

Karadzic is regarded as a main impediment to elections scheduled for 14 September, a key element in the international effort to stitch Bosnia back together after three and half years of war. Under the terms of the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war, it is illegal for someone indicted for war crimes to hold or run for office.

Last Saturday, Karadzic was re-elected leader of the ruling extreme nationalist Serb Democratic Party which is expected to win elections in the Serb entity in Bosnia later this year. Defying the international community again, Radovan Karadzic's party has asked him to run in Bosnia's elections in September.

Hong Kong democracy worries

ARMED Beijing police this week blocked eight Hong Kong democrats from handing a protest petition to Chinese leaders, triggering warnings that with China's rule exactly a year away, freedom in the territory might be in peril. The protesters were forced to return home after police carrying automatic rifles surrounded their plane after it touched down on the Chinese mainland, held them on board for two hours and confiscated their travel permits.

Other opponents of communist China staged a rally this week to mark the 365-day countdown to Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty after more than 150 years of British rule. Democrats who fear the 1 July 1997 handover by Britain staged a march outside China's representative office in Hong Kong and held a candlelight vigil outside the legislative council that China has vowed to scrap.

The incidents occurred as China said it would press ahead with its plans to bulldoze the colony's democratically elected legislative council, replace it with a hand-picked assembly and name a chief executive to replace the British governor, Chris Patten.

China has promised that Hong Kong can keep its capitalist system for 50 years under a "one country, two systems" agreement made with Britain. But many groups have expressed doubts, strengthened by recent confusing statements by Beijing officials, about China's intentions.

The island of Hong Kong was a collection of sleepy fishing villages and pirate hangouts when Britain seized it in 1841 after defeating China in war. It is now a jewel of skyscrapers, industry and high finance, with a population of 6.3 million.

Politburo underlines vigilance

VIETNAM'S ruling Communist Party named a new Politburo with the same top three leaders as before — General Secretary Do Muoi, President Le Duc Anh and Premier Vo Van Kiet — but more members from the security forces. The leadership line-up reinforced themes that had already emerged from the party's four-day congress: continuity and vigilance.

General Secretary Do Muoi, appointed to a second five-year term, called it a "congress of continued reform". It endorsed further efforts to integrate Vietnam into the world community and liberalise the economy.

But speakers also warned against threats to party power from home and abroad. They said corruption and widening urban-rural income gaps could trigger discontent, and foreign ideas could subvert socialism. The congress appointed a new 170-member Central Committee and 18-member Politburo, both slightly younger overall than before. Six of the Politburo members, however, are from the military and police — an increase of two — giving the body a conservative cast.

Party officials have said the three top leaders may retire in the second half of next year, rather than serve full second terms, if agreement can be reached on successors. The internal party debate over leadership and policy took place in private before the congress, which was scripted to be a show of unity.

Compiled by Heba Samir

China and US avert trade war

The trade war between Washington and Beijing was warded off because the US turned a blind eye to China's human rights record and overlooked political differences, writes **Sayed Awad**

An all-out commercial war between the United States and China was averted last month thanks to a last-minute agreement between the two economic giants. Tough negotiations from 17 May to 17 June between acting US trade representative in China, Charlene Barshefsky, and Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing eventually achieved a positive result.

China pledged to close factories involved in piracy operations and open up its market to original products. Fifteen out of the country's 20 factories that manufacture compact discs are being shut down. It will also organise security campaigns to arrest those who violate copyright laws and step up surveillance measures to prevent pirated goods from being exported to neighbouring Asian countries.

In return, US President Bill Clinton renewed China's most favoured nation status. Beijing also urged the US to fulfil the promises it made in the trade talks and assist China in gaining membership of the World Trade Organisation.

The last-minute agreement signifies that important progress has been made, but it does not mean that the disagreement between the two nations has been completely resolved. China did not submit to a US demand that joint projects be established for supervising cultural products such as films and books. Beijing wants to maintain its cultural sovereignty.

The conflict between Washington and Beijing reached a height during the last two months, after the US set 17 June as the deadline for China to take action. The US was ready to impose sanctions on \$3 billion dollars worth of Chinese

imports, including cloth, electronic equipment and other consumer goods.

In retaliation, China announced that it would clamp 100 per cent taxes on American imports such as cars, communications equipment, agricultural goods and vegetable oil, as well as suspending the import of audio and visual equipment including film, tapes and CDs.

The conflict stemmed from the two countries being unable to reach a decisive agreement on intellectual property rights, including publicity rights and patents on inventions, and commercial relations. The Americans claimed piracy of their products in China has cost US industry billions of dollars.

This year's crisis is related to another incident which occurred in February 1995. Then the US complained that it was losing a lot of money from copyright violations and announced that it would impose harsh punishments on Beijing, including raising customs duties on \$1.8 billion worth of Chinese imports by 100 per cent.

China retaliated by raising taxes on American imports and went as far as prohibiting many American companies from opening offices in China. Beijing also suspended talks with American car companies which were planning to make use of cheap Chinese labour and the vast

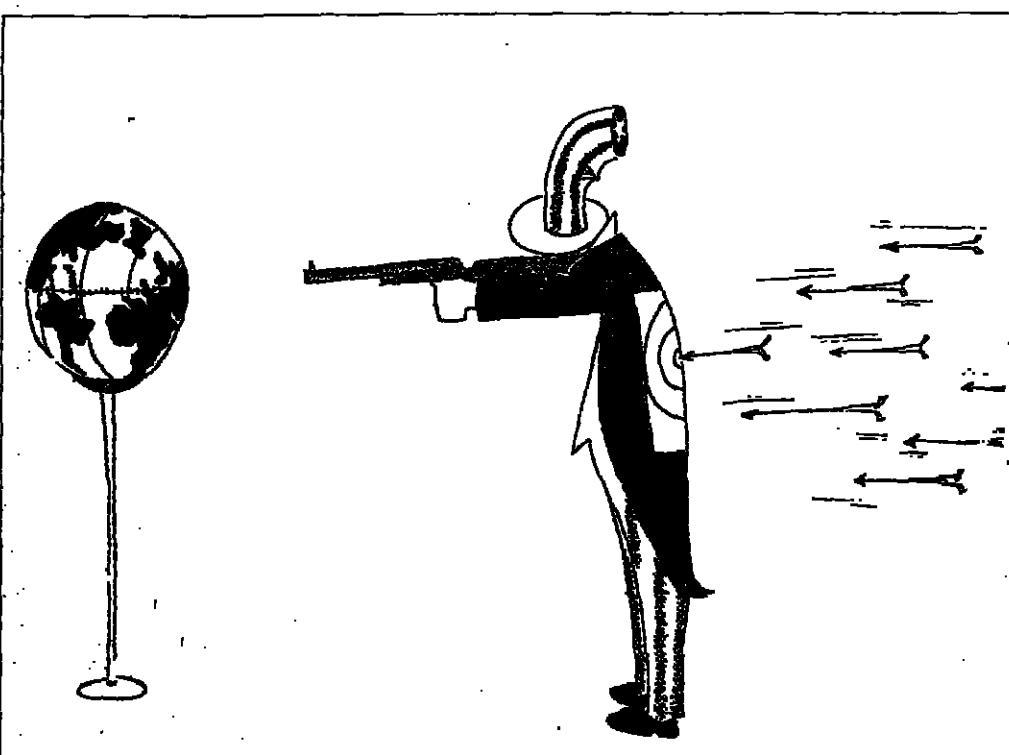
Chinese market in order to increase their competitive edge over Japanese products.

At the last moment, both sides reached an agreement to protect the intellectual property rights of American products in the Chinese market. Beijing closed six CD factories, some of which were owned by the state. The American administration considered the agreement a commercial triumph for US industry.

The crisis this year was settled when both sides realised the losses they would suffer from an all-out trade war. The American administration was nervous about its car and plane sectors and was pressured to be more lenient with the Chinese by the country's industrial lobby.

Beijing, for its part, was faced with the fact that the American market absorbs 40 per cent of its exports and that the US is the third largest investor in China. The Chinese are also reliant on American technology and need to attract as much foreign investment as they can to spend a planned \$1,000 billion on infrastructure by the end of the decade.

The US cannot, in turn, neglect China's enormous economic potential. Washington cannot afford to miss out on the vast, growing market in China and to leave it as easy prey for European and Japanese competition.



Rhetorically speaking

On the agenda of the stalled peace negotiations in the region are issues such as the return of the Golan to Syria, making East Jerusalem the capital of a Palestinian state and the right of return for refugees. But, on Netanyahu's agenda is one issue — Israeli security.

Innately didactic and unyielding, Netanyahu has allowed one month to pass since his election into office without a single step being taken towards normalising relations between his country and its Arab neighbours. In fact, his only tangible step has been to launch a barrage of snappy sound-bites and extremist rhetoric at Egypt and the other Arab countries for holding the Arab summit.

As free-flowing as his glib commentary about the summit is his blatant disregard for the future of the region and his willingness to substitute ultimatums for action in the name of ensuring Israel's security interests. These he has placed above all else, including peace.

But if Netanyahu were truly interested in promoting Israel's internal security interests, would he not have already initiated the redeployment of troops from Hebron? Would he also have pondered, pouted and pontificated before grudgingly agreeing to "open channels of communication at all levels" with the PNA? And, would he have wasted valuable time laying down the condition that no conditions must be present for the final status negotiations to resume? In short, would he not have just embraced peace for the sake of peace, secure in the knowledge that the only way to ensure Israel's security would be to undo the blind-fold over his eyes and cooperate rather than retaliate.

This is the political reality he is faced with and refuses to accept. Using a recent attack by a break-off faction of the PLO as justification, Israel has launched yet another air assault on southern Lebanon, once again turning this country into the chessboard for its power struggle, taking the battle to the field instead of the negotiating table. If Netanyahu is committed to anything, then it is to ignoring the advice of some members of his cabinet and eschewing any tangible effort to promote anything but his self-serving interests.

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The new realpolitik

The Middle East is subject to an array of new realities, a situation which, Ibrahim Nafie argues, Israel ignores at its peril



There can be no doubt that the election of Binyamin Netanyahu and the rise to power in Israel of the right-wing Likud will have major regional repercussions. Four years of negotiations with the Labour Party and its left-wing allies have seen political and diplomatic circles around the world become accustomed to dealing with a specific faction of Israeli politicians. Now that these people are no longer in place it is time to take stock and, more importantly, seek to create new circumstances to counter the changes that have taken place.

During this period of transition it is important that we retain our historical perspective on events that have occurred since the October War, events that have radically altered the image of Arabs in the West. During this period agreements were concluded to disengage forces on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts, constituting the first step in the peace process. In 1977, when the Likud came to power in Israel, a peace accord was signed with Egypt, creating the first framework for a solution to the Palestinian problem, or as Arafat said, the Israeli foreign minister at the time said, laying the foundations for a Palestinian state.

This Likud government was followed in the eighties by a succession of "two-headed" governments in which the Likud and Labour parties shared power. But with the exception of a few isolated spurts of activity that quickly dissipated, the peace process was effectively frozen during this period. Then came the end of the Cold War, signalling a thaw on many fronts, and giving momentum to a dialogue that would result in the Madrid peace conference.

During this same period Egyptian policy, under both Sadat and Mubarak, has remained the same. Cairo has never been concerned over whether doves or hawks were in power in Israel. Its concern has always been to try and advance the legitimate demands of Arabs whatever the rhetoric of the Israeli government.

For example, Cairo was never once prepared to excuse the Labour government for its blockade of the Palestinian people, its invasion of Lebanon and its barbarous massacre of Qana or its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, even if that would have helped the Labour government remain in power. Egypt's aim has consistently been to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region. Egypt has worked ceaselessly towards this end, engineering along the way new realities that no Israeli government could afford to ignore.

The peace process, which began in Madrid, is no longer mired in squabbles over the interpretation of Resolution 242. It operates within the framework of specific agreements signed between Israel and the PLO. There is no way that Israel can rewrite such agreements. In his campaign speech-

es Netanyahu may have compared the Oslo, Cairo and Washington accords to the Munich agreement that preceded World War II. Now that he is in power he will not be able to dismiss these accords with such nonchalance.

Nor have domestic Israeli politics proved exempt from the new realities created by Madrid. There is now a widely based constituency within Israel with vested interests in the continuation of the peace process, a broad coalition of forces from the political left and centre, including Israeli Arabs and Israeli businessmen.

The recent Cairo Arab summit has also created a new reality that no one in Israel, and few analysts elsewhere, had anticipated. Israel, as Netanyahu's extremist campaign speeches testify, has always banked on the Arabs being too contentious to unite. Any practical manifestation of pan-Arabism, they believed, breathed its last with the end of the Gulf War. Now, however unpardonable they find it, the Israelis must reassess this conviction.

The Arab Summit in Cairo coincided with the Florence EU Summit. The latter, in its final statement, confirmed the position taken by the Arabs — i.e. that the Madrid conference and Oslo agreements should continue to set the framework for the peace process. The European summit called for all parties to resume negotiations on all fronts, and on all subjects, including the status of Jerusalem.

The Arab summit and the European summit created another reality which also involves the US. A week after the Florence summit, the G7 summit began in Lyon. In its final statement, the meeting of the world's richest countries also underlined the justice of Arab demands. "Now that it is imperative to reactivate the peace process, we urge all parties to abide by their commitments, particularly to the agreements that have already been signed, and to resume their efforts toward a comprehensive peace founded upon the Madrid process, the principle of land for peace and other principles cited in the pertinent UN Security Council res-

olutions." So read the G7 final communiqué. President Mubarak's visit to France this week, and Amr Moussa's visit to Great Britain, aim to capitalise on the emerging consensus represented by the EU and G7 summit statements.

As to how matters will eventually fall out, much will depend on Netanyahu's forthcoming visits to Washington and to Cairo. The result of these visits is likely to reshape the Middle East, producing a political landscape radically different from that which existed at the time of the election of Israel's Labour government in 1992.

Netanyahu has already begun to retract some of his more virulent campaign statements, particularly with regards to the Oslo agreements, the status of Jerusalem and his willingness to meet with Arafat. But does this imply that Netanyahu is contemplating a U-turn? So far, no. He may have softened on certain issues, but he continues to wage diplomatic guerrilla warfare, particularly against Egypt, to divert attention away from the essential issues. The fabricated Scud crisis is a case in point.

The new Israeli government is clearly being pulled in opposite directions. On the one hand it wants to adhere to its declared election platform, yet on the other it cannot ignore the new realities created by the Arabs. The Israeli government, however, remains in need of further prodding. Certainly we must be vigilant of Israeli attempts to derail the peace process through petty diplomatic machinations. Egyptian diplomacy is acutely aware of Israel's inclinations in this respect. Egypt's main task, therefore, from now until the end of the US elections, will be to continue to remind the world that at the heart of the peace process lies Israel's willingness to adhere to commitments already stipulated and ratified in the Oslo accords.

A war climate once again

Mohamed Sid-Ahmed suggests that Netanyahu's policies have not only derailed the peace process, but threaten to plunge the region once again into a climate of war

Since Netanyahu was elected as Israel's new prime minister, a state of tension has gripped the Middle East, replacing the relative tranquillity which prevailed when the assumption was that a peace process had been set into motion, and that it could eventually deliver. There is a strong sense of déjà vu, as the region seems caught in a scenario reminiscent of the Cold War.

Everybody is aware that, in legal terms, Netanyahu is in flagrant breach of the basic premises of the peace process. By vowing not to return the Golan to Syria in exchange for peace, not only during his electoral campaign but even after assuming power, he is openly violating Resolution 242, the very cornerstone of the entire peace process. Even more critical is the climate of tension, hostility and mutual distrust that he has succeeded in engendering practically overnight, in total contradiction with the confidence-building measures that are an indispensable component of any project for peace.

Netanyahu's intransigence has led many to describe him as an anomaly in the new world game, a throwback to the Cold War. But before subscribing to this overly simplistic description, it might be useful to ask just what the new world game is. Does it already have definite rules, or is it a process still in the making, whose ultimate shape has yet to materialise? If we take the Russian elections as an illustration, it is clear that with the decline of ideology, it is authoritarianism, the idea of order in opposition to that of chaos, that is filling the gap. In a way, General Lebed, the candidate of the military, the man who can impose order by force of arms, has emerged as a referee between Communist candidate Zyuganov and President Yeltsin, the candidate who enjoys unconditional Western support.

Netanyahu too is an advocate of military deterrence, which he considers his main card in the negotiations. When he calls for negotiations without preconditions, he is actually demanding

that no restrictions be placed on his privileged position as the occupying power, in short, for the ascendancy of might over right. With his accession to power, the name of the game has suddenly changed. It is no longer how to make peace, but how to bully the other parties into complying with his conditions. This is true in Netanyahu's relations not only with the Arabs, but even with the US administration, Israel's closest ally.

Thus Netanyahu refused to receive Dennis Ross, on the grounds that he does not deal with functionaries, whatever their rank. He told Secretary of State Warren Christopher that he will inform him of Israel's position but will only negotiate with President Clinton. Netanyahu knows that his rival, Peres, was Clinton's chosen candidate in Israel's general elections. He believes that, if before the Israeli elections the American president had the means to intervene to Likud's disadvantage in internal Israeli politics, on the eve of the US presidential election it is now Israel's Jewish lobby in America, intervene with impunity in American internal politics.

The new Israeli government's bullying tactics with the US have provoked the US to retaliate in kind — but against Egypt, not Israel! The American administration has suddenly discovered that Egypt secretly acquired Scud missiles from North Korea which, if the allegation proves true, justifies cutting economic aid to Egypt. Simultaneously, the issue of Gaddafi's arrival to the Arab summit by plane, in defiance of the flight ban imposed by the UN on Libya because of the Lockerbie dispute, has also become a major issue that Egypt is required to explain. Finally, there is the virulent campaign launched by the US against Boutros Ghali, and the unprecedented threat to use its veto power to block his re-election. Even if the "irrevocable" decision to remove Boutros Ghali is not directed against Egypt, but reflects Washington's anger at the secretary-general's decision to release the UN report establishing that the Qana massacre was not, as

the Israelis claimed, a "tragic mistake", but a deliberate act of cold-blooded murder, it can only be seen as an unfriendly act by Cairo.

These are not the only signs of a deteriorating situation. The joint Israeli-Turkish air and sea manoeuvres have given the word "Middle Easternism", originally coined to express a purely economic venture, namely, the Middle East market, alarming military connotations. Indeed, they have ushered in a new era of regional axes and counter-axes, with Greece and Armenia, and possibly also Iran, coming together in the face of this new threat. At the same time, Netanyahu is sparing no effort to exacerbate inter-Arab divisions, showering Jordan with praise while accusing Syria of being a key actor in fomenting terrorism throughout the region.

Following the call for an Arab summit, Washington advised the Arab leaders to postpone its convocation on the grounds that Netanyahu's statements during the electoral campaign were not necessarily an accurate reflection of the policies he would follow as prime minister. Had the Arabs heeded Washington's advice, Netanyahu would have been free to continue his procrastination and conceal his deliberate intention to scuttle the peace process.

Actually, the Arab leaders were not only interested in the summit as a means of placing Netanyahu before his responsibility and proving to the world at large that statesmanship is unlikely to replace the bellicose rhetoric that marked his election campaign. It was also a means by which to stand up to the alternative logic in the Arab world which holds that the whole peace process was doomed to failure from the start. If such a logic prevails, this would be at the expense of all the advocates of peace in the region. There is today a race between two contradictory logics in the Arab world, that of the Arab regimes which are sticking to the peace line and that of forces which are resorting to violence to protest the manipulation of the Arab world. The recent explosion in Saudi Arabia is very significant in this respect.

Pirates of the word

By Naguib Mahfouz

My publisher Al-Sahhar has, over the years, never dealt with me in anything but a correct and courteous way. However, no sooner is a book published in Egypt, or some work serialised in a newspaper or magazine, than one hears that it has been pirated and published in Lebanon or Morocco. This is not necessarily all bad, since there is a large North African readership acquainted with my works largely through pirated editions.

Piracy, though it represents a financial loss can also result in cultural gain. Often friends returning from abroad bring editions of my works that I did not know existed. I well remember receiving a letter from a reader informing me that one of my novels had been pirated and was selling in Lebanon, and that there were some differences with the version published by Al-Sahhar.

Once I actually signed a contract with a copyright pirate. I was sitting in the Café Riche one day when a tall Lebanese man introduced himself to me, saying: "I am the publisher who pirated all your novels, from *The Absurdity of Fate to Miramar*." I asked him what he wanted and he explained that he wanted me to sign a contract entitling him to become my "official copyright pirate". Apparently, such was the competition between pirates that he wanted an exclusive deal. I was to receive my author's fees, of course. I found this extremely logical, and promptly signed the contract.

Based on an interview by Mohamed Salaway.

The Press This Week Scuds and duds

Al-Ahram: "In his bizarre joint press conference with Christopher, Netanyahu has revealed his true intentions. With a mere shrug he has blown away all international resolutions (on the Arab-Israeli conflict)... ignoring the basic principle of land for peace and linking peace and security, overlooking the fact that security should be for all and not just for Israel." (Ihsan Bakr, 30 June)

October: "To be quite honest it is no longer clear whether the US is a friend or foe. Can it actually hold a principled and objective position? Is Warren Christopher really the US Secretary of State or a second Israeli foreign minister? And when we stand before the US and Israel can we clearly tell which is the opponent and which is the judge?" (Ragab El-Banna, 30 June)

Al-Wafd: "Which is more dangerous to peace and security: the Israeli nuclear weapons and advanced air force or the Scud missiles recently linked to Egypt? ...What is it that Israel wants from Egypt? To leave Arab lands as prey to Israeli encroachment and Zionist ambitions? And what does the US want exactly, after giving in to numerous Zionist demands? Egypt is not bound to appease Netanyahu. Egypt's decisions emanate from Cairo, not from Tel Aviv or Washington." (Editorial, 1 July)

Rose El-Youssef: "When Egypt takes the necessary stance appropriate to its strategic role in the region, a strange affliction hits US policy... It is as though the US master imagines that Egypt must submit to his demands or threats and never oppose his desires unless it wishes to face endless problems to the extent of threatening to besiege it and cut off all aid." (Mahmoud El-Tokami, 1 July)

Al-Arab: "We welcome the G-7 summit's declaration of war on terrorism... on the condition that matters should be clarified: the struggle against Israeli occupation is legitimate, the struggle to recover what poorer nations have lost is legitimate, the struggle to prevent the world from splitting into a predatory North and an impoverished South is legitimate... even if this is not to the liking of the US and its six partners." (Galal Aref, 1 July)

Al-Ahram: "US policies are quite clear and Americans have never hesitated in declaring it. They are for an Israel that is stronger than all the Arab countries combined, they are against any Arab force opposing it and they are particularly against a strong Egypt... So what is there to astonish and anger us when they remind us that we are not allowed to possess long range missiles? Only a few months ago they asked us to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, despite our insistence that Israel should sign as well." (Hassamein Kroom, 29 June)

Al-Shaab: "A new Israeli nuclear reactor at the Egyptian borders — a news item carried by news agencies and described as an ordinary matter... Yet they are making all this fuss over Egypt's Scud missiles!" (2 July)

Al-Mussawwar: "Only a month ago the Israelis were talking about the US president acting as Israel's obedient boy! Now we hear that Clinton needs Netanyahu much more than the Israeli premier needs the White House..." (Mahram Mohamed Ahmed, 5 July)

Al-Ahali: "Now that the Cairo summit has brought the concept of Arab solidarity back to life, a plan of action is needed to bring it into effect. Unfortunately, the summit did not set any time schedule for such a plan... Time is the Arab's most precious possession especially when they have to confront the intentions to freeze or even sabotage the peace process." (Lofti Waked, 3 July)

Al-Akbar: "Without a consensus on the land-for-peace principle negotiations are meaningless. The problem, however, is that Netanyahu considers the land-for-peace principle a threat to Israeli security, and, along with the Americans, sees the pressing issues as those of Egypt obtaining Scud missiles materials, Gaddafi's plane landing at Cairo Airport, Syria's support for the Lebanese resistance and the necessity of imposing sanctions against Damascus... Perhaps the communiqué issued by the Lyons [G7] summit will help Israeli leaders realise how far they are from the rest of the world... their language and stances do not belong to this age." (Nabil Zaki, 30 June)

Compiled by Hala Saqr



The movement of the eyebrows that surmount the bespectacled visage of Boutros Boutros Ghali are joined to his mouth in an amused choreography. Together with his typically ringing laughter, odds with the fraught and difficult outlook, which might seem at first deal. Such a demeanour might seem rippant, if it were not for the massive head, that seems at times to have been carved from the Aswan granite in which the features of his ancestors were so often portrayed. And like those ancestors, his physiognomy speaks of experience, wisdom and level-headedness.

مركز لاجل

Close up

Salama A. Salama

Reading the danger signs

The communiqué issued by the G7 summit concerning peace in the Middle East was warmly received, not only in Egypt but by the whole Arab world. Behind this reception lies the fact that the communiqué provides the kind of international support that has, since the Israeli elections, been noticeable by its absence, most significantly in the US, which since Netanyahu's victory has been intent on facilitating Israeli attempts both to debase the neutral basis on which the peace process had been built and to renege on agreements already concluded with the Palestinians.

G7 summits rarely discuss international issues in great depth and there is no fixed agenda. These meetings are generally viewed as little more than a talking shop for the leaders of the wealthiest industrialised nations. It cannot be denied, however, that what emerges from such summits is a reflection of the thinking of the major powers. Statements issued by the summit merely outline common ground and the direction of general policy with regard to current international issues and crises.

It was always unlikely that the Lyon communiqué would deal with the complex variables affecting the peace process since Netanyahu came to power. What the communiqué did instead was to offer a cautious general formulation stressing the main principles on which the peace process was founded — i.e. land for peace, and the resolutions of the Security Council — while at the same time enjoining all parties to resume bilateral negotiations at the earliest possible date.

Many observers consider the G7 summit no more than a public relations show by the world's rich. And certainly, as is the case at all summits, behind the scenes negotiations tend to be of greater import than public declarations.

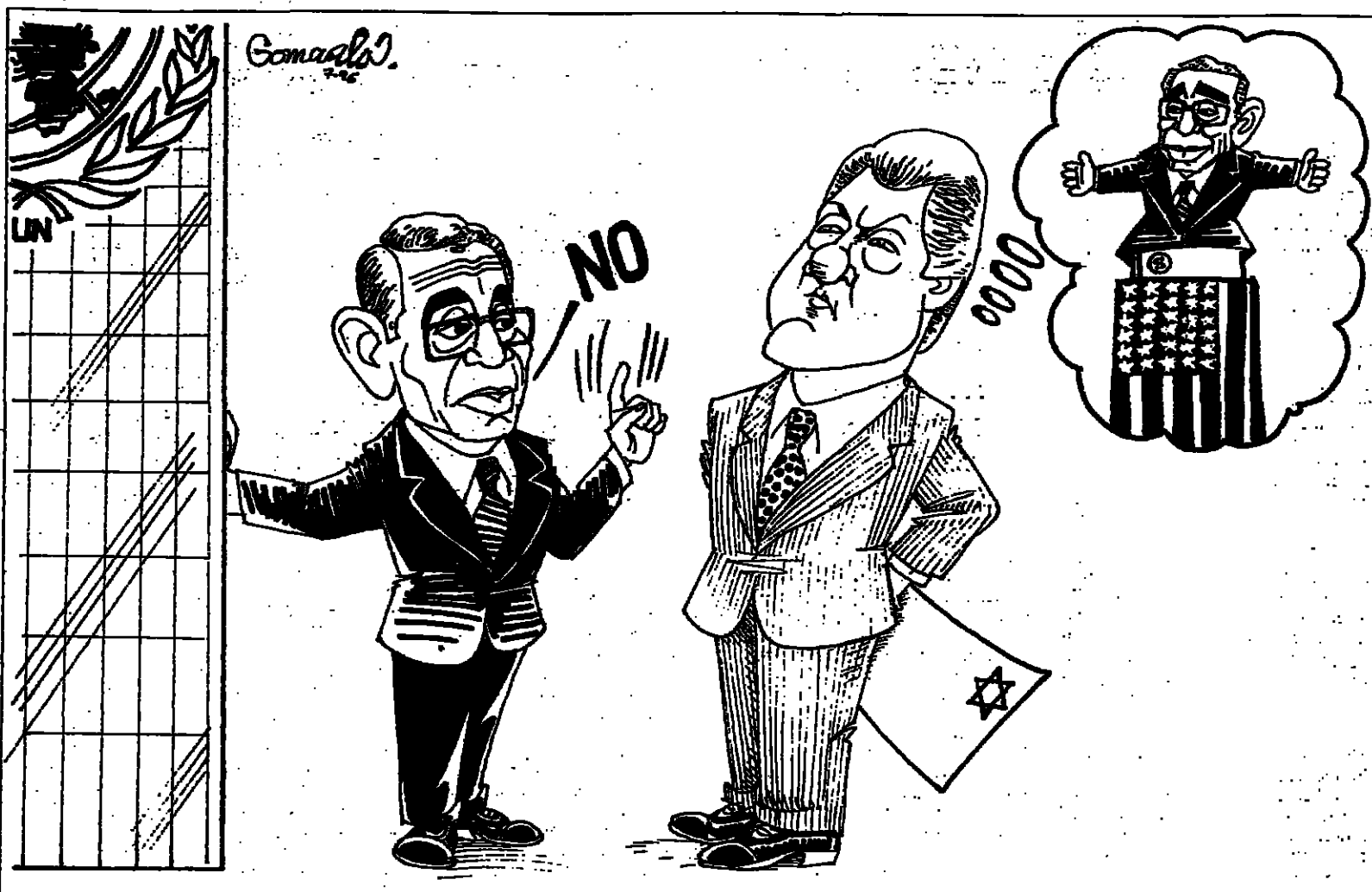
President Mubarak's visit to France, which came in the wake of the G7 summit, was made against the backdrop of Arab fears over the collapse of the peace process — expressed by the Arab summit conference in Cairo — and constituted a continuation of international efforts to rescue the peace process.

The bomb detonated at Dharan in Saudi Arabia has made it increasingly apparent that terrorist activity in the region cannot be dissociated from the atmosphere surrounding the peace process. Yet the American administration has, it would appear, yet to take on board the extent of the dangers posed by the current situation and by the increasingly antagonistic campaigns conducted against Syria, Egypt and the Palestinian National Authority by the Jewish lobby in America.

It is obvious that attempts to transcend the major differences that have appeared within Egyptian-American relations constitute a concrete obstacle. And it is equally obvious that some Jewish circles in the US, supportive of Netanyahu, are working at widening the rift.

Egyptian officials have tried to contain the effects of this campaign. Yet the US authorities appear incapable of comprehending Arab concerns, and are making no attempts at reassurance. The Scud missile affair, linked by American sources and the cause of much anger in Cairo, illustrates the dangers attached to Israeli campaigns.

The Middle East is passing through a critical phase. And the G7 summit communiqué, while it soothed some Arab fears, is hardly up to the task of engineering a resumption of the peace process.



The multi-facets of peace

If the Arab Summit achieved one thing, it was to assert that peace is not relative, argues Gamil Matar

Some Arab political commentators have exhibited a tendency to minimise not only the substance but the extent of the changes that have taken place in the Israeli government. This attitude, shared by some foreign observers, is not without cause. Israel is, after all, a state founded on an ideological creed. It is a state in which both citizens and political parties adhere to an unwritten national charter. This charter differs from that of other nations in that it is restricted to the founding principles of the state, justifying the right of the state and its creed to exist. And since this charter does not extend to protecting and safeguarding a specific form of government we should not, it is argued, expect any significant transformation in the fundamental nature and conduct of the state simply because its government has changed.

Other commentators, however, have pinned their hopes on at least some change in the way Israel approaches the negotiating process, not least in the speed with which it is willing to implement specific points of agreement. These people have a right to believe that a major transformation did indeed occur in Israel when the reins of power shifted from Peres to Netanyahu.

It would be foolhardy to under-emphasise the distinction between these two perspectives. They are not a minor divergence of opinion; rather they represent two fundamentally different Arab visions of peace. And the achievement of the Arab summit held in Cairo can be measured by its success in transcending the conflict between these two visions and reconciling them in the paragraph of its final communiqué dealing with the principles of Arab-Israeli peace.

It is certainly no coincidence that this particular paragraph stirred the new Israeli government into complaining angrily that the Arabs have set preconditions for the peace process. The Netanyahu government was never likely to accept the content of this paragraph, since to do so would have been tantamount to agreeing to resume Arab-Israeli negotiations where they left off on the eve of Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon. This would have been at odds with the impetus of Israel's recent election results, the direction of which appears to be an attempt to set the clock back to some earlier stage of the negotiations.

Israeli rejection of the principles forming what the Arabs term the basis for future negotiations should not, then, come as any surprise. And herein lies the rub: the paragraph in the final statement outlined non-

negotiable principles. Yet the Likud government is demanding they be renegotiated.

In the lead up to the summit the view was often voiced that the Arabs would prove incapable of realising any united stance towards the Israeli government's new negotiating line. Commentators predicted that Arab reactions would follow clearly demarcated lines. Those countries that had already obtained territorial concessions from previous agreements were not expected to resist Israel's tougher stance while other countries that have yet to regain territory, traditionally more hard-line, were expected to become even more obdurate. Those in the middle, having obtained only a fraction of the land and the recognition of a few, though by no means all of their rights, were expected to be cautious of appearing too radical. And then there is the fourth group, those Arab nations that are far from the heart of the conflict and who, according to some analysts, would be fearful of any show of toughness. It seems, furthermore, that Israel's rulers had based their predictions of the summit's results on such categorisations.

The Arab summit demonstrated the redundancy of such glib categorisations. Not all parties who had gained from previously concluded agreements and not all countries outside of the front-line corridor were exclusively moderate. Nor were those parties that have yet to obtain their due territorial rights particularly radical. Indeed, the moderate-radical divide upon which Israel had hedged its bets simply did not manifest itself. This does not mean that Israel had adopted a new and less pertinent analysis of the situation. Israel has always depended on its ability to deal with Arab parties separately, and consequently from a position of strength. And it has always banked on Arab states having divergent concepts of peace.

Israel has different ways of talking about peace with different Arab countries. Peace with Jordan is a strategic peace. No Israeli official could doubt the value of peace with Jordan. Israel cannot normalise relations with the rest of the Arab world if it does not first succeed in normalising its relations with Jordan. Only via Jordan does any Arab-Israeli defence coordination become at all viable. If Israel entertains hopes of entering — or aborting — any regional arrangements, it has to do so through Jordan. Jordan is Israel's gateway to the Arabs of the Tigris-Euphrates valley and to the Arabs of the Gulf, its mediator between two cultures and visions, and its trump card in gaining access to Arab petroleum wealth.

Many Israeli policy-makers are not too shy to admit that in Israel's view there can be no solution to the Palestinian problem unless Jordan is involved. Israel under Netanyahu, just as under Peres, holds the Palestinian National Authority responsible for guaranteeing that Israeli citizens remain safe from the violence, anger and misery of the Palestinian people. Jordan will be asked to guarantee that the PNA fulfils this task, and if necessary, itself assume the responsibility. At the Sharm El-Sheikh summit, Israel tried to convince the US to draw up a formula that would implicitly enjoin Jordan and Syria to act as guarantors against violence emanating from Palestine or Lebanon. That Syria did not attend the summit frustrated this effort. But at the last moment Israel got its guarantees via bilateral arrangements and agreements with the US. This is what gave Israel the green light to launch its massacre in southern Lebanon.

Israel's peace with Egypt is a "cold peace." I believe that both countries have come to accept this fact and are now basing their plans for future Egyptian-Israeli relations on this frigidity. In other words, it appears that both sides have reached a tacit agreement that recognises that there is no hope for any sudden surge of warmth in the contractual "peace" that exists between them. One can understand the logic of both sides. The ruling elites in both countries have acquired the conviction that every new distortion in the balance of military power in the region — i.e. every new addition to Israel's military superiority — compounds the accumulated store of mistrust. Every new relationship that Israel establishes with other Arab or non-Arab countries in the region detracts from Egypt's regional status. Every proposal for new regional orders pushed so enthusiastically by the international community in order to diversify and broaden the basis for Israel's normalisation and in order to enhance its regional role comes at the expense of regional configurations in which Egypt plays a central role.

Against this backdrop some commentators have, however, revised their opinions to contend that the cold peace is not, in reality, as immutable or as slow to change as it appears. The logic that precludes the possibility of any thaw in relations in the foreseeable future, also informs the growing conviction that it is probably easier for this "peace" to degenerate into a "cold war" than to continue as it is, for any length of time. For over a

year exchanges between Israel and Egypt have suggested to many an iciness that is more characteristic of a state of cold war than of cold peace. Diplomatic and political relations between the two are reminiscent of those that existed between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Common borders are calm, but there are red lines that neither side dare cross and certain rules and tacit understandings that prevent the situation between them from deteriorating into open hostility.

Neither "strategic" nor "cold", peace with Syria is a "deferred" peace. Israel and Syria have yet to reach any agreements or new understandings with respect to their mutual relations or with regards to the region as a whole. There is no flow of goods, personal or communications between the two countries that could remotely suggest any degree of normalisation. Yet, at the same time, they are jointly involved in the "peace process" and evince a commitment to reaching peace. Israel's early decision to defer negotiations with Syria had a certain logic, even if it resulted in a heavy death toll in the security belt in southern Lebanon. The aim was to deprive the Palestinians and the Jordanians of any opportunity to coordinate with Syria when they were negotiating with Israel. It also gave the US the occasion to intensify pressures on Syria and to keep Syria on the list of countries supporting terrorism. Ultimately Israel hoped that its delay tactic would ignite latent inter-Arab conflicts and first antagonisms between the Arab world and Iran and between the Arab world and Turkey. In other words, Israel's persistent refusal to entertain peace prospects with Syria affords it more time to assess how regional configurations of power might realign themselves.

Relations with Arab countries lying outside the cordon of front-line states, the countries of North Africa and of the Gulf, are treated by the Israeli media as a sort of folk-dance. Peace with these countries — from Israel's perspective — is no more than a picturesque detail. It does not involve the intricate complications of secret and overt negotiations, the shuttling back and forth between European and American capitals, the buffeting by internal or external pressures and the need to demarcate security and military boundaries. As a result, Israel does not take these relationships seriously, but rather as a form of light entertainment to amuse Israeli policy-makers after a strenuous day of obstructing more fundamental progress in the peace negotiations.

Soapbox

An unequal battle

Boutros-Boutros Ghali's fight for nomination for a second term as secretary-general of the UN in the face of American opposition is an aspect of the struggle between the poor South and the world's sole superpower.

Politically speaking it is a far from equal battle, pitting Ghali, a veteran diplomat, against the US administration, which via the Security Council wields a veto on his reappointment.

Whatever Ghali's future prospects, now would seem an apposite time to examine the record of his first term of office at the UN. Under his leadership the UN has performed a high profile role, both in rescue and peace keeping operations, and in organising international conferences.

Over the past few years the UN Secretary-General, through his actions, has confirmed his reputation as both a prudent diplomat and a courageous international official. His period as head of the UN has been distinguished by an independent and democratic attitude towards running the organisation. The problems he faces now stem from the fact that, as an Egyptian, Arab and an African, he has never been inclined to accept, unquestioningly, the dictates of the world's only superpower.

Ghali's efforts, added to his predecessor's, constitute nothing less than an historical legacy, a foundation on which the UN might build in order to foster a better and more just international system.

Perhaps it is sufficient tribute to Boutros Ghali simply to state that he tried so hard and so assiduously to pursue a line that was independent. He deserves our support, and when he returns, he deserves to be welcomed, indeed, the highest honours the Egyptian state can bestow.



This week's Soapbox speaker is a professor of political science at Helwan University and president of Al-Qarar Consulting Centre.

El-Sayed Eltiwa

Pragmatism no longer the order of the day

Separate agreements have had their day, argues Osama El-Ghazali Harb. What is needed now is a steadfast commitment to a comprehensive settlement

The most recent developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict lead to only one conclusion — that separate settlements concluded by Israel with individual Arab states are a thing of the past. It has now become apparent that nothing short of a comprehensive settlement between Israel and all the Arabs will be acceptable.

The origins of any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict must perforce date back to Sadat's visit to Israel in November 1977. Since that visit took place, almost two decades ago, the question of partial versus comprehensive settlement has been the centre of controversy. Should Arab states enter into negotiations with Israel separately to settle their specific problems, or should Arab countries collectively enter negotiations with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement?

So-called nationalist or revolutionary Arab regimes have tended to favour a comprehensive approach to peace, bitterly criticising those Arab regimes which concluded partial settlements with Israel. Sadat is the bete noire of these regimes. Egypt, however, refused to cave in under the pressure of Arab rejectionism, and eventually recovered all its territory in return for peace. Fifteen years later, separate settlements were reached between Israel and the PLO (starting with the Oslo Accord), and between Israel and Jordan. These agreements were, in their turn, targeted by the advocates of a comprehensive settlement.

It is important, at this juncture, that we examine the underlying causes for the adoption of a partial versus a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Is the rationale behind the choice dependent on the intensity of nationalist sentiments, or is it a result of a profound awareness of the importance and value of Arab unity? Does the insistence on a comprehensive settlement reflect dedication on the part of certain Arab countries to the goals and ideals of Arab nationalism on one hand, and a willingness to enter into individual agreements reflect an antagonism towards such goals on the other?

Perhaps at this point one should state a self-evident truth: those countries that have concluded partial agreements with Israel did so because such agreements served some of their interests, i.e. they

did so for pragmatic reasons. Yet in concluding such agreements the countries concerned certainly hoped that their actions would pave the way for a comprehensive settlement.

Similarly, countries which have staunchly supported a comprehensive agreement have done so believing that their own interests can only be served through such an approach. Yet, while in essence their rationale was self-serving, they still reserved the right to raise emotional nationalist banners. The objective realities that justify disparate approaches to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict must, then, be sought in specificities on a case by case basis.

In 1977 Sadat had no alternative but to seek to conclude a separate peace with Israel. He exhorted Arab leaders to join his initiative for peace but they lacked his broad vision and far-sightedness. Though abandoned by the rest, Sadat would not turn away from what he believed was the best course of action for Egypt. He wished to capitalise on the results of the October War when such memories were still vivid in the memory of Israel and the world.

Sadat was undoubtedly conscious that even acting singly Egypt could obtain what it wanted from Israel. Egypt is, after all, the largest Arab country. Its military capabilities, as evinced in the October War, posed a real threat to Israel. Nor could Sinai be considered, from the Israeli point of view, as being of the same strategic or political import as other Arab territories under Israeli occupation. Agreements on limiting the deployment of weapons in Sinai was enough to assuage Israeli fears and secure a withdrawal.

In the case of Jordan, King Hussein was able to conclude a separate peace with Israel which served Jordan's interests. The situation, though, was different to that prevailing at the time of the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel, not least because Jordan could never be considered as posing a military threat to its neighbour. Disputes over occupied territory were also, at the time of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement, at a low ebb.

The Palestinian agreement represents yet another scenario. A separate peace deal concluded with the Palestinians served, on some levels at least, as a recognition of a distinct Palestinian identity. It might be seen as a manifestation of the paradox in which

Palestinians find themselves. For while Palestinians need to underwrite their independence as a nation with an assertion of their own identity and right to self-determination, they have always supported movements for Arab unity. An ironic situation arises: the only nod in the direction of Arab unity condoned by the Israelis has been their desire to see Palestinian negotiators incorporated into the negotiating teams of other countries, a kind of back-handed refusal to acknowledge a distinct Palestinian identity. Yet in asserting their identity, the Palestinians have found it impolitic to comply with Israeli demands.

The current situation, though, begs one question: Is it now possible, as we approach the remaining stages of the peace process, to pursue separate settlements on the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian fronts? All the signs in place appear to point to one conclusion: that separate agreements with Israel have now been subsumed by the desire to achieve a comprehensive peace.

From the very outset of the process President A1-Asad has known that Syria would not be able to conclude an honourable settlement with Israel on its own. The Golan Heights, symbolically and strategically, are of great importance to Israel, far greater than Sinai, while at the same time Syria, unlike Egypt, poses a less serious military threat to Israel. Syria, from the beginning, was in no position to compromise Arab support in the manner Sadat did.

The position of Lebanon is similar to that of Syria. Despite the heroism that has marked Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation, Lebanon cannot confront Israel on its own. A comprehensive Arab settlement is a must for Lebanon, which has not only to secure its own territorial integrity but must also address the problem of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. This presence is at the heart of the refugee question, one of the substantive issues on the agenda of a comprehensive settlement.

The settlement seems most complicated on the Palestinian front. While a separate settlement is required to underline the national identity of Palestinians, a comprehensive settlement is required if Palestinian demands for the establishment of a Palestinian state, the recovery of the Arab sector of Jerusalem and a stop to the

building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, are to receive any meaningful response.

Should Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority engage in separate negotiations, they will not achieve the results they desire outside the context of strong and clearly united Arab support. Such support cannot be engendered by, or incorporated into, the mandate of individual delegations. It can be realised only through regular regional — and international — consultations.

The recognition of this fact on the part of the Arab parties to peace is the most important achievement of the Cairo Arab Summit. It is a recognition that Israel's government has always feared, under both Peres and Netanyahu. Indeed, in its level-headed assessment of the problems to be faced in the next stage of negotiations, the summit could well serve as a model for Arab negotiators seeking a comprehensive settlement.

The summit, though, represents a first step on a long and winding road. By inviting Arab leaders to the meeting — after consultations with King Fahd and President Assad — President Mubarak was in fact inviting the Arab parties to initiate a new phase, fraught with risk and difficulty, for the achievement of a comprehensive and just peace. Under Sadat Egypt — forced to accept a separate peace — never abandoned wider Arab issues. Under Mubarak too, Egypt is steering a course towards a comprehensive peace, without forfeiting the achievements of previous separate settlements.

It is surely no coincidence that, just as Israeli fears are reaching new heights, the reins of power should have been handed over to the Likud. And in the face of the new realities heralded by the Cairo summit, one question poses itself. Will the Israeli prime minister persist in his obsolete demagoguery? Will he continue simply to shake his head and say no, no to the return of the Golan, no to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and no to the return of East Jerusalem?

The writer is the editor-in-chief of Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya (International Politics) Journal.

Nehad Selaiha is bowled over by Yukio Ninagawa's Kabuki Medea

Medea in drag

Until last week, and despite what all the theatre history books say, "Cleopatra performed by a male" had always seemed to me a preposterous proposition — one that required a fantastic leap of the imagination. I had felt sure that whatever "boy actor" undertook the part in Shakespeare's day must have mangled it, producing a pitiful travesty of the Egyptian queen. I had also resented the idea of males usurping the voices and identities of women and ousting them from the public performance arena in the name of theatrical conventions. As a reasonable human being and mild feminist, the exclusion of women from the theatre in whatever age or country, in ancient Greece, Elizabethan England or 17th century Japan (female performances were banned by the authorities in 1629), seemed to me not only outrageously unfair and deeply offensive, but also contrary to the spirit of theatre itself as carnival and a festive communal event.

On the few occasions I had the chance to watch a Kabuki performance, a form of theatre exclusive to male actors, such feelings had always coloured my reception. I still remember my vicious delight at the audience's baffled reaction to the classical Kabuki play presented at the official opening of the Opera House nearly eight years ago. It was a solemn occasion, attended by the president and his wife plus an exclusive audience. Nevertheless, after the 15 minutes of stunned silence, and despite the gorgeous, elaborate costumes and scenery, many were fighting desperately to keep a straight face while others sought relief in giggles and sniggers. The following morning a cartoon by Mustafa Hussein in *Al-Ikhar* showed a woman in a state of nervous collapse with her mother supporting her and explaining that her husband had jumped at her from under the stairs, doing a "Kabuki act". This signalled a flood of jokes about Kabuki.

On that occasion it was obvious that the Egyptian audience could not connect in any meaningful way, aesthetic

or otherwise, with the spectacle on offer. With no previous experience of this art form and very little knowledge as to what to expect, they had found the movements and the vocal delivery of the performers almost outlandish.

Last Saturday, however, at the Ninagawa Company's production of Euripides' *Medea*, it was a different story. At the same place, in the main hall of the Opera House where the earlier Kabuki performance had taken place, director Yukio Ninagawa showed us what a talented, imaginative artist could do with old forms and conventions. Many of the basic features of classical Kabuki were there: the carefully regulated and choreographed movements (known as *kata* or *form*); the poses (*mie*) which accentuate the climactic moments of the action; the use of the traditional three-stringed musical instrument called *shamisen*, of wooden clappers to orchestrate the performance and highlight the climaxes and, above all, the use of *onnagata*, or male actors in female roles. But while preserving them, Ninagawa, like a real master, managed to break through with his own innovations.

What he achieved in his version of Euripides' *Medea* (a very shrewd and happy choice of text) was not simply a perfect fusion of Japanese traditional stylisation and Western modern realism, or a bridging of the past and the present, as has been said, but also what one can only describe, in terms of its impact, as a kind of mystical union of maleness and femaleness in the figure of the great Tokusaburo Arashi as Medea.

From an obvious symbol of femaleness — traditionally conceived and visually rendered in terms of dress, gesture, movement and mask — we watched him transform himself, wizard-like, into a warm, vibrant human presence that transcends sexual difference and bodies forth in vivid details the warring passions of all humanity. In this respect, not only the acting — the intricate voice manipulation, the deeply compelling full-body techniques and

according to the notes on the production printed in the pamphlet, Tsujimura adapted traditional Japanese costumes to a modern primitivist style, using a variety of Kimono materials, and the capes were handmade from 50 pieces of embroidered antique silk sashes. But apart from their great beauty, which delighted the eye, the costumes, in harmony with the movement, were used in the case of the chorus to structure the performance space and build sequences of powerful, evocative stage images. In the case of Medea they had the added dramatic function of underscoring her growing despair and loneliness and her final rejection of the traditional stereotypes of the submissive female, the obedient wife, and the tender, self-sacrificing mother. Arashi appears first richly decked out in full feminine regalia. As the play progresses he begins to strip, taking off the heavy bejewelled hat first, then the wide, colourful cloak, and finally the intricately embroidered outer garment. He is left with a very simple, close-fitting long dress, the colour of blood and matching skull-fitting bonnet. At this moment, the whole body, freed from the constricting traditional trappings of femininity, becomes a stunningly eloquent medium of expression, shedding its earlier stylised patterns of movement and gesture, and growing freer and more passionate.

Curiously, it was the sight of this thin, gaunt, male body, tensed up in rage, pitifully contorted in agony or dashing around blindly, like a wild, caged bird, that brought home to me, for the first time in performance, the full weight of Medea's tragedy as woman and human being. It reminded me that great acting, whatever the sex of the performer, could transcend all limitation, including those of sexual identity. I walked away from the show thinking that given a director of Ninagawa's imaginative power and an actor of Arashi's emotional range and technical versatility, Cleopatra played by a male was not after all such a ludicrous idea. But then, why not a female Antony, or Lear, or Hamlet?

Tokusaburo Arashi as Medea

the carefully injected doses of psychological realism — but also Jusaburo Tsujimura's costumes played a crucial role. They were naturally, as one expects all costumes in Noh and Kabuki performances, rich and sumptuous in colour and material, delicately embroidered and exquisitely designed. Ac-



Tokusaburo Arashi as Medea

Music

Cairo Symphony Orchestra: Talents 4; Bizet: *The Arlesienne suite* no. 2, *Fantaisie*; Mozart: *Concerto* no. 20 in D minor for piano and orchestra, K466, Ghada Shaker (piano) and *Concerto* in B flat major for bassoon and orchestra, K191, Tamer Kamal El-Din (bassoon); Mendelssohn: *Symphony* no. 4 in A major, op. 90 (Italian); Kamal Hilal, conductor; Small Hall, Cairo Opera House; 30 June

Watch the crochets fly and swing, hear the quavers quiver. There were notes, notes, notes everywhere at this concert in the Small Hall. Notes and a certain pulse of rhythms. But no beat, beat, beat of the tomtoms to add that so needed piquant sauce of excitement and allure.

The two soloists, pianist Ghada Shaker and bassoonist Tamer Kamal El-Din were fine. The Cairo Symphony Orchestra were there — partly in person, partly in absentia. Strange anomaly. Good evening, said they. Then, rather in embarrassment: for what exactly?

To commence, Bizet, whose piece *Fantaisie* from *L'Arlesienne* suite opened the concert. This was quite straight, rather hard sounding, with plenty of brassy noise. That's the way of this dance. But as the concert wore on, it once again became obvious that the Small Hall is the villain, causing problems for any concert given within its over-reverberative walls. No large forces; small string orchestras suit it best.

Even the piano has a rough deal if it opens out fully, as pianos are wont to do in their grand expansive moods. Chamber music comes off best. They do not burst the sound barriers, but an orchestra of some size puts the hall into an angry fit of protest and it whams the sound back from the walls with a harsh exuberant double-fuzz to anything

Open wide the windows



Ghada Shaker

above a mezza-forte. So proceeded the concert. Some conductors can bring some sweetness into the limited overcharged space, but Kamal Hilal did not have the trick. He angered the place and got in return only an approximation of a good classical tone — which was what was needed for this concert. Better keep to the middle of the road — don't fly off into the bushes and scrub-land at the sides.

First came the Mozart piano concerto in D minor, K466 with Ghada Shaker in control. This is Mozart in *Don Giovanni* mood. It's a grand big thing in all of the three sections. Powerful, sometimes dark, seldom with his gift for love and affection. The melodies for pain are really for the piano — instrumental, percussive, jabbing and thrusting, darkly forbidding. Nothing singing or easy. The pianist knew all about this. She was direct, no nonsense, no trace of dear Amadeus to charm us, but forceful, statuesque, with the correct flair of cynical bravado.

At the opening Shaker drove

straight in. This is a star piece — shapely, deep shadows, with no fairies in these shades, just a few very tall, well-dressed fiends. The piano made the tunes painfully clear cut. The orchestra, suffering from Small Hall laryngitis, was dumpy, but picked up in the next movement, the Romance. There is not much romance in the notes. There was none in the piano playing. She was honest, no passion — anger instead. Ghada Shaker's technique is fully equal to the demands of the D minor. She could even make an insolent attack on the phrase endings which culminate mostly in an angry trill. All these she did, timely, on the beat and exciting. In control, on top, and never wavering. It was very good to hear. There are spots in the romance where the music droops and slides which might have had greater nuance, but this player went for direct force and carry on. It was a cool romance to say the least.

In the last section Shaker showed real distinction of schooling. No soliciting the listener. The off-hand stabbing

little tune which darts out towards the end was good. It is really rather insulting Amadeus's nose in the air, a shrug, and then — no one else in all music can do so deliver a polite put-down. An avuncular encounter.

And so bassoonists do play this strange instrument which looks like the carnivorous Venus fly trap. Tamer Kamal El-Din, tall as his instrument, made it sound positively maternal. At least he took it out of the jungle. The sound is neither brassy nor trumpet-like, but gently humorous and with an operatic ability to do coloratura, trills and rapid beats. He seems like a virtuoso. Everything was done with ease and perfect tunefulness. In this work Mozart lays on the charm denied to the piano in the previous concerto. Plenty of brass behind him, very loud (the Small Hall once again). The slow part of the concerto is mournful — a touch of the funeral, fitting because the bassoon has a smoky tone. Who loves the bassoon? Mozart and Strauss did. And so does Tamer Kamal El-Din, who

uses it like a voice. With no trouble he floats the sound far up and out of the noisy Small Hall into a place of contemplation where this long neglected, eccentric instrument enjoys its own poetry.

And so to Italy with Mendelssohn's no. 4 in A major. The colour is zircon blue. It blows along in the opening: fresh sea breezes, the siren South of Dryden and Goethe. The latter went over the Alps and far away — blue taffeta skies and Tintoretto colours: speed, rhythm, youth and no regrets. Is there anyone who has ever been really, totally happy? Mendelssohn seems to have been, and he paid the price for it. All angels pay the price for their own dazzle. They phut out like errant stars. Everyone loved this wonder. He had everything of value in addition to his millions. But they were part of his skin, and he with total Olympian indifference never had to look down so far as to see the hand that wrote the cheque. The gods loved him so well they took him before the smallest fleck of earthly attrition ever touched him.

The music catches the breath. This performance of the Italian symphony did not. Let's continue to blame the Small Hall. From opening to end the poor strings doing their best were totally drowned by the brass, winds and basses. Everything blew over the top of the strings so there was not much sea wind to flutter and soar during an opening which must set the picture of the Grand Tour. There were strange digestive rumbles in the orchestra foreign to Mendelssohn. They continued until the end. No colour blue and no rippling seascapes. But at the end, in the last movement, the horns finally righted themselves with no frayed edges and gave the cry: I love Italy, everyone loves Italy and everyone loves Mendelssohn.

Listings

EXHIBITIONS

Barbara Graf & Sadiyo Niederberger
Mashrabiya Gallery, 8 Cham-pollion St, Downtown. Tel 578 4494. Daily exc Fri, 11am-8pm. Until 4 July.
Exhibition under the title "The Travel Kit".

Gatal Abdel-Hay, Emsa Shabla & Mohamed Ismail
Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 18 Sidi Mervalla St, near El-Azhar, Alexandria. Tel 482 1598. Until 4 July.
Photographic exhibition under the title "Alexandria 3x3".

Jihan Raouf, Sameh El-Babany & Lobna Zakaria
Khan El-Maghriby Gallery, 18 El-Monsour Mohamed St, Zamalek. Tel 340 3349. Daily exc Sun, 10.30am-3pm & 6pm-9pm. Until 6 July.
Exhibition under the collective title "Fantasy" are the paintings of the three artists.

Pottery Exhibitions
Gallery Noun, 4 Mahmoud Abdul Ouan St, off Hegaz St, El-Mokhama, Heliopolis. Tel 248 0083. Daily 11am-11pm. Until 7 July.
Artists from all over Egypt exhibit their pottery work.

Georges Seif (Paintings)
Gallery Salama, 36/A Ahmed Orabi St, Mohandessin. Tel 346 3342. Daily exc Fri, 10am-2.30pm & 3.30pm-9.30pm. Until 23 July.

Mohamed Shaker (Paintings) & Tarek Zaby (Sculptures)
Esraa Gallery, 3 El-Nassim St, Zamalek. Tel 340 6293. Daily exc Sun, 10.30am-2pm & 3pm-8pm. 9-27 July.

Group Show (Paintings & Sculptures)
Esraa Gallery, 1 El-Sherifein St, Downtown. Tel 393 1699. Daily exc Fri & Sat, 9am-1pm. Until 5 August.

The Museum of Mr and Mrs Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil
1 Kafour El-Akhdid St, Dokki. Tel 336 2376. Daily exc Mon, 10am-6pm.
Egypt's largest collection of nineteenth century European art, amassed by the late Mahmoud Khalil, including works by Courbet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet and Rodin.

Egyptian Museum
Tahrir Sq, Downtown. Tel 573 4319.

Male body, tensed up in rage, pitifully contorted in agony or dashing around blindly, like a wild, caged bird, that brought home to me, for the first time in performance, the full weight of Medea's tragedy as woman and human being. It reminded me that great acting, whatever the sex of the performer, could transcend all limitation, including those of sexual identity. I walked away from the show thinking that given a director of Ninagawa's imaginative power and an actor of Arashi's emotional range and technical versatility, Cleopatra played by a male was not after all such a ludicrous idea. But then, why not a female Antony, or Lear, or Hamlet?

Coptic Museum
Mar Girgis, Old Cairo. Tel 362 8766. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm.
Founded in 1910, the museum houses the largest collection of Coptic art and artefacts in the world.

Islamic Museum
Fort Said St, Ahmed Maher St, Bab El-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520. Daily exc Fri, 9am-6pm; Fri 9am-11.30am & 3pm-6pm.

A vast collection of Islamic arts and crafts including *mashrabiya*, lustreware ceramics, textiles, woodwork and coins, drawn from Egypt's Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk periods and other countries in the Islamic world.

Museum of Modern Egyptian Art
Opera House Grounds, Gezira. Tel 340 6861. Daily exc Mon, 10am-1pm & 3pm-9pm.
A permanent display of paintings and sculpture charting the modern art movement in Egypt from its earliest pioneers to latest practitioners.

Mohamed Naghi Museum
Chateau Pyramide, 9 Mahmoud At-Guindi St, Giza.
A museum devoted to the paintings of Mohamed Naghi (1888-1956).

Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum
Tahrir St, Gezira. Daily exc Sun and Mon, 9am-1.30pm.
A permanent collection of works by the sculptor Mahmud Mukhtar (d. 1934), whose granite monument to Saad Zaghloul stands near Qasr El-Nil Bridge.

FILMS

River of Fireflies
Japanese Cultural Centre, 106

Qasr El-Ahli St, Garden City. 4 July. 6pm.
Directed by Eiso Sogawa (1987). The film captures the first love of a 14-year-old boy. The beautiful scenery of the four seasons provides a wonderful background for the spectacular scene of one million fireflies.

Commercial cinemas change their programmes every Monday. The information provided is valid through to Sunday after which it is wise to check with the cinemas.

Mit Foll
Rivoli II, 26th July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 8pm & 10pm. Dine Palace, 17 El-Ahly St, Emadaddin, Downtown. Tel 924 727. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba II, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.
Starring Hisham Saleh Selim and Sherihan as a husband and wife who, upon being given the opportunity of choosing a new father, choose the same rich man and end up as siblings.

Ya Donia... Ya Gharami (Life... My Passion)
Rivoli I, 26 July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. Reza, Roxy Sq, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0344. Daily 10am, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba I, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.
Magdi Ahmed Ali's debut film explores the intimate lives of three women played by Leila Elwi, Elham Shabane and Hala Sedqi.

Esharet Merour (Traffic Light)
Miaad, 38 Talaat Harb St.

Man Without a Face
Tahrir, 112 Tahrir St, Dokki. Tel 535 5726. Thur & Sat, midnight.

Braveheart
Narmandy, 31 El-Ahram St, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0254. Daily, 8pm.

DANCE

La Scala De Barcelona
Cairo International Conference Centre, Nasr City. Tel 263 4631/2. Until 6 July. 8.30pm & 11.30pm.

THEATRE

El-Amr, Tantaza
(The Princess Awais)
Zaki Talaat Hall, El-Taili Theatre, Ataba. Tel 937 948. Daily exc Tues, 9.30pm.

El-Set Hoda (Lady Hoda)
National Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 911 267. Daily exc Wed, 9.30pm.

El-Kharta Fi Wara (The Map Is In Crisis)
National Theatre, as above. Thur-Sat, 9pm.

El-Zaim (The Leader)
El-Haram Theatre, Pyramids Road, Giza. Tel 386 3952. Daily exc Tues, 9.30pm.

Dastoor Ya Sladsa (With Your Permission, Masters)
El-Pan Theatre, Ramessy St. Tel 578 2444. Daily 10pm, Sat 8.30pm.

Norhan Wal Amir Morgan (Norhan and The Prince Morgan)
Puppet Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 591 0954. Daily 6.30pm.

Mama America
Qasr El-Nil Theatre, Qasr El-Nil St. Tel 575 0761. Daily 10pm, Mon 8pm.
Scripted by Mahdi Youssef, starring and directed by, Mohamed Sobhi.

Bahlool Fi Istanbul (Bahlool in Istanbul)
Ramessy Hilton Theatre, El-Galaa St. Tel 574 7435. Daily exc Mon, 10pm.

All information correct at time of going to press. However, it remains wise to check with venues first, since programmes, dates and times are subject to change at very short notice.

Please telephone or send information to Listings, Al-Ahram Weekly, Galaa St, Cairo. Tel 5786064. Fax 5786089/833.

Compiled by Inji El-Kashef

Around the galleries



Sameh El-Babany

CERAMIC works by young Egyptian and foreign artists are exhibited at both the Museum of Modern Egyptian Art and Akhenaten Gallery.

The Egyptian Centre for International Cultural Cooperation hosts paintings by Salah Zaki, notable for the articulation of pictorial space by a subtle blending of colours.

Khan El-Maghriby shows new work by Sameh El-Babany, Djehane Raouf and Lobna Zakaria. All three take one of the traditional subjects of still life — the flower painting — and update it in radical and exciting ways.

The Opera House gallery is given over to expressive faces, melancholic and piercing, by Fakhri Osman. Also at the Opera House is an exhibition by Magid Abdel-Razik, entitled "Contemplations", featuring depictions of traditional weddings.

Reviewed by Nagwa El-Ashri



Hassan Fathi: Was he the model for the architect Dimitri, the central character in Lawrence Durrell's unfinished novel *Village of Turtle Doves*?

The tale of two villages

The story of New Gourma, Hassan Fathi's ideal village, provided the basis for Peristerona, the village at the heart of an unfinished and unpublished novel by Lawrence Durrell. **David Roessel** examines the links between the English novelist and Egypt's most celebrated architect

Caradoc was gorgeously, cavernously drunk. "Three bloody years spent building the perfect village, the perfect township which nobody would ever live in. Peristerona, Village of Turtle Doves, or Turtle Doveville. Someday someone really ought to write it all down. If you knew all the facts, the ins and outs, as I do, old man."

"Why not tell the whole story from the beginning," I suggested. "Pass the wine," murmured Caradoc, "and I'll see if I can remember everything exactly as it happened."

Peristerona means "village of turtle doves" in Greek, but in a letter to Austen Harrison, an English architect whom Durrell met on Cyprus, he referred to the work-in-progress as "the story of Gourma transplanted to Greece." Still, Durrell started writing this never to be finished work on Cyprus, and sought information about town planning from the public work department of the island. I had assumed that the setting was Cypriot, and had looked there in vain for a Gourma or Peristerona which might have sparked Durrell's imagination. One night I had all of the topographical maps of Cyprus stretched out on the tables of the library in the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute. I groaned aloud — "Where the hell is Gourma?" and a calm low voice behind me answered "in Egypt". And after consulting a few references it did indeed become increasingly clear that the Egyptian Gourma was in fact Durrell's Gourma and what I had originally thought might be inspired by a small scale colonial building project on Cyprus was in fact a reflection of one of the most famous architectural creations of this century.

Site discovered, we can finally come close to doing what Caradoc originally proposed — staring at the beginning and remembering everything exactly as it happened.

Durrell's tale begins with the appearance of antiquities on the black market, which are eventually traced to a single source — a village "built on the site of an ancient necropolis. Under the houses apparently lie tombs, which are stealthily rifled by the villagers. They probably dig through the stable floors. They are getting good prices for this stuff, hence their distrust of visitors and questions." In *Gourma: A Tale of Two Villages* Hassan Fathi has a section titled "A Tomb Robbery Begets a Housing Project" and goes on to say: "The village of Gourma is built on a site of the Tombs of the Nobles... Their [the villagers'] economy was almost wholly dependent on tomb robbing. The only solution was to rehouse them, but hitherto this had been far too expensive a proposition."

Durrell clearly intended to continue to employ information about the Gourma project in later passages. The notes in which he sketched an outline of the work include the following: "No money? Local Brick? J. Blenkinsop's undation."

While Hassan Fathi's decision to use mud brick was an exclusively economic, the fact that raw materials were inexpensive and accessible did play a part in his thinking and that of the officials who commissioned him to build Gourma. It is clear Durrell intended to introduce Hassan Fathi's innovative construction technique, but the notes provide no clue as to how he would use it.

At another point Durrell wrote "Dimitri to be charged with misappropriation of public funds". His arrival in the capital to face these charges "coincides with the first batch of foreign releases on Peristerona. Volte Face. Project must be finished." Fathi ran into problems with local administrators, who, among other things, accused him of "two grave irregularities in our proceedings" relating to

financial matters. Fathi speaks of a big report that gathered signatures in a number of ministries which would have taken responsibility for the Gourma project away from him. It was not the foreign press, however, but firm support of the Egyptian Undersecretary of State, which allowed Fathi to go forward.

Another note reads: "Work proceeds. But the inhabitants of old Peristerona have now learned they will be forced to move. Dimitri and Caradoc summoned to Palace. Phone call. Dam opened. They return by air. Plimsoll mark. Units of the Greek army close the cocks in [first]."

An incident like this actually happened. Fathi had gone to Cairo after the receipt of a telegram from the Undersecretary of State in September 1947. While there, he received a phone call that the dyke protecting Gourma from the rising of the Nile had been broken and the village was flooded. On his return to Luxor, an agonising overnight journey by train rather than plane, he found the water had only risen a metre and a half on the western side. He goes on: "All the Gourmas had refused to work on the dyke, and even those who had been rounded up the night before and put to work had made off through the water under cover of darkness, rather than help to save their new village. While working, they had contrived to widen the gap with their feet while ostensibly filling it with their hands." After the sabotage, the government sent in an investigator. According to Fathi "they went round the village, asking 'did you pierce the dike?' Every villager in turn replied 'no' and when the attorney had filled up three sheets of legal-sized paper with these answers, he went home satisfied the matter had been investigated." The story of Gourma provided endless possibilities for the pen of a satirist.

Durrell obviously had a good source for the "Story of Gourma," an inside source. Fathi's book was published for the first time in 1969, and while there had certainly been newspaper reports about the Gourma project, Durrell could only have learned the inside story, the "ins and outs" such as the campaign by certain officials against the new village and the attempt by some villagers to break the dyke from someone very familiar with the project. And, on Cyprus, Durrell had met just such a source; the identity of whom, in my view, is signalled in the selection of the name Dimitri for the Greek architect. Dimitri Papadimos was a photographer on the Gourma project. It cannot be a coincidence that Durrell met Papadimos shortly before he (Durrell) began work on *A Village of Turtle Doves* in 1956. Durrell may also have received some information about Gourma from Austen Harrison — the mention of the story of Gourma in the letter from Durrell to Harrison suggests that they had discussed Fathi's project. But Harrison's source was, in all likelihood, the same as Durrell's. Papadimos was a friend and protégé of Harrison, whom he met in Egypt in 1938 if not earlier. Papadimos may have got the position of photographer on the Gourma project on the recommendation of Harrison.

Harrison was based in Egypt from 1937 until he moved to Cyprus in the late 1940s, although he often took jobs which demanded his presence elsewhere. While Fathi described Harrison as an old friend, this does not prove that they knew each other in Egypt, since Fathi spent some time in Athens in the 1960s when Harrison was living there. In any case, Harrison was not intimately connected with the building of New Gourma in the way that Papadimos was. The Greek photographer remains the best candidate for the details of the ins and outs of Gourma.

I could dwell further on Durrell's incorporation of facts about Gourma and his sources for these facts, but I think

that I have said enough. What is of interest is how Durrell shaped the story of Gourma for his own purposes, how a real project on the Nile became Durrell's tale of Peristerona.

The most important alteration is that Durrell's story of Gourma is not simply a tale of two villages, but a tale of two architects. The native architect, the Greek Dimitri, a young man of 25, is described "as harmless and delightful as he was talented," but something of a dilettante with violent yet changeable enthusiasms. He is the one who has "the tantalising image of a dream city, a dream village, rising like a mirage in his soul". He is appointed to the project because all of the architects in the capital did not want to be sent to the provinces. "A groan had gone up from the entire faculty when the minister announced that a model village was to be sited in a remote corner of Macedonia. It was clear that none of them would willingly isolate himself in so remote a place, far from the capital, to deal with a project that nobody would see. All eyes turned to Dimitri as he sat drawing endless men in bowler hats on a sheet of foolscap, hardly listening to the argument as it wound its tedious way along. He had not protested when they unanimously agreed he was the man for the job."

This happened before the English changed the prestige of the project by "appointing one of their top planners to share the task, and to be able to say one had worked with the great Caradoc was a tremendous thing for a young architect: Caradoc of the Karghar suspension bridge, Caradoc of the Carnegie Dome." Caradoc appears to be based very loosely on Durrell's friend Austen Harrison — the Carnegie Dome standing in the for the famous Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, but how closely is a bit of a puzzle because it is rather difficult to find details of Harrison's life.

Durrell appears to have set up a "colonial farce" in which the leading architect is a gorgeous, cavernous English drunk, "the only town-planner whose streets and thoroughfares are planned expressly for the feet of toss-pots totting home to bed after a sloshing." He is coupled with a bright young native architect who has "tantalising outlines of a dream city, a dream village... rising like a mirage in his soul." While we don't know exactly how the story would be played out, we have a sense of who would do the work and who would get the credit.

It is hard to see from what we have how the change in location from Egypt to Greece would have affected the novel. Durrell planned to make use of descriptions he had made of Macedonia during a holiday in 1952, for in his outline he remarked "Cut Chalkidiki notes in." I cannot say whether Durrell moved the story mostly because he was more familiar with the Greek landscape and village customs and so could provide a more authentic touch, or whether he thought placing it in Egypt would be too close to home for Fathi, Papadimos, and Harrison. A subplot concerns Dimitri's love affair with the actress Beha, who is also involved with fellow actor Srotan (because she thought, "Occasionally it comes over a girl that she must make love hard — like having a tooth out.") Fathi himself was in an odd triangular situation for a while, but Durrell was quite capable of making this part up without help.

One aspect of the story seems directly connected to Durrell's experience on Cyprus. The Greek minister of the interior tells his prime minister that simple expropriation and removal of the villagers would not be wise. "Excellency. This happens to be a very Turkish village. There are a few Greeks and Vlachs but that is all. They are pretty backward and rough. If we tried force we might have an unlucky incident followed by international

repercussions...we cannot afford any complaints that we are ill treating the Turkish minority." There were, and still are, some Turkish areas in Greece, mostly in Eastern Thrace. The date of the typescript of the first three chapters 1954 makes this comment especially interesting. The concerns of the Turkish minority were often cited by the British as a reason for remaining in Cyprus.

It would have been extremely interesting to see how Durrell handled the ethnic tensions in this novel, he must have wanted to do something with these tensions, because he could easily have left the Greek/Turkish problem out of the novel — it played no role at Gourma and was, as I said, not a problem in the area of Greece where the novel is set. But, unfortunately, Durrell never mentions the ethnic problem again in the existing chapters or the outline.

That takes us about as far as we can go, except to note that the very end of the outline, which refers to a film of the famous project, reads: "What a lot of fuss for a town nobody will ever live in." Juxtaposed with the opening printed at the beginning of this article it gives some idea of the tone which the work would have.

Although Durrell went no further on *A Village of Turtle Doves*, he did not quickly abandon his desire to write the story of Gourma. The rebuilding of Peristeri remained the central focus of several drafts of another work in progress from the early 1960s, entitled *The Placebo: An Arid Comedy*. According to Shelley Cox, who has done an admirable job in examining these drafts Felix Charles, later the narrator of *Tunc*, joins Caradoc on the Peristeri project at the instigation of Teresa Hippolyta, another character who will figure prominently in *Tunc*. Cox writes: "About half of the text deals with two trips to Peristeri, the first by airplane for survey purposes only, ending in a mock dive-bombing of the legation lawn, and half with the start of work upon the village, which begins with the destruction of the old Roman dam to recreate the original river... restoring the pre-Roman landscape. The survey party returns to Athens, and the real work on the village has not yet begun". Clearly, here we are getting away from the actual details of Hassan Fathi's New Gourma.

Unlike the figure of Caradoc, the plot of the building of Peristeri was not included in the next novel which Durrell eventually published — *Tunc*. Yet Durrell's long reflection about Fathi's dream certainly affected the work. The first draft of *A Village of the Turtle Doves* opened:

"As far as Beauty is concerned," said Caradoc, "what is it? Don't groan, my dear boy, I hate aphorisms as much as you do. But somewhere, at the heart of the matter, there is something accidental. God-given, if you like."

"I don't like."

"Nor do I. Nevertheless something that resides in the divine accident, I have one illegitimate daughter and two conceived in wedlock. Of the three the love-child is the true beauty. The others simply pass muster."

"Unplanned paternity," I said. "Some hints to fathers by an unplanned father."

"Hell," he said. "You don't listen. The Peristeri project was like that. Three bloody years spent in building the perfect village, the perfect township which nobody would ever live in. A love-child if ever there was one."

"A brain-child too."

"Yes, that too. But when all the conscious thinking and planning was done something else stepped in — the spirit of pure mischief perhaps, of accident. Something for which we had not legislated. It is more perfect than even its builders conceived."

Plain Talk

I am a great believer in coincidences and what has just happened supports my belief. On the 27 June the Lawrence Durrell Conference, taking place in Alexandria ended. By coincidence, the next day I received an advance copy of a book by John Cromer, a poet who lived in Egypt during the second world war. It was Cromer who in 1942 met Durrell on his arrival to Alexandria from Greece. Cromer at that time was in field security, responsible for security vetting of civilians, and it was his job to take Durrell to Cairo where he installed him and his wife in the Luna Park Hotel.

John Cromer and I published a book entitled *Under Egypt's Spell*. As joint memoirs of cultural life in Egypt during the war, the book is a saga of English poets and novelists who were stationed in Egypt and who were directly influenced by the different aspects of the country.

Cromer's above-mentioned book, *Outside of Gemini*, is a collection of 99 poems mostly inspired by Egypt. About his poetry collection, Cromer writes: "This period of my life was not only the most fruitful and imaginative in terms of poetry, but also one of the most concentrated and intensely strenuous in developing administrative skill."

Cromer was one of the founders of *Salamander*, a magazine started by Keith Bullen, at that time headmaster of the Gezira Preparatory School. On Sunday mornings Bullen's drawing room became a literary salon. Among the regular frequenters of that salon were G. S. Fraser, John Waller, John Galsworthy and Durrell Wilkinson. It was there that the seeds of the Salamander Society, which published a number of anthologies of war-time poetry, including *Oasis* and *Return of Oasis*, were sown.

I had the pleasure of attending some of the Sunday morning meetings, and I remember that we often crossed the road to the Anglo-Egyptian Union — now the Officers' Club — to carry on discussions with the *Personal Landscape* group which included Lawrence Durrell, Terence Tiller, Bernard Spencer, Robin Fadden and others. Those days were culturally and artistically rich.

I never cease to marvel at the strange discrepancies of fate — at how, during times of great unrest and travail humanity appears capable of consolidating its artistic output, producing an ever greater quantity art. Perhaps aesthetic production is intimately linked to trauma, is, indeed, an attempt to put order into a disorderly world. And what could be more disordered than a world war? What could fly more in the face of man's aspirations to civilisation than such unbridled carnage?

Cromer's collection has a number of poems on Egypt such as "Egypt", "March Winds in Egypt", "October in Egypt", "Egyptian Evening" and others. The poem "Egypt" begins thus:

"This is the land of veiled expectancy
Where the past rises from the weeping sand
And the future casts shadows on its own approach
Everywhere is an invitation to colour and fragrance
But the hidden senses find no welcome;
The wind sweep of the palm intrigues
But, bare of intricacy, is soon forgotten."

Cromer's letter echoes a note of hope, but also reflects sadness in its announcement of the passing away of some war-time friends, John Galsworthy, John Waller, Terence Tiller, Lawrence Durrell and Rex Collings. "There are few of us left now," he writes. How true.

Mursi Saad El-Din

The city will follow

Nazek Fahmy reviews the proceedings of the Lawrence Durrell conference, which ended last week

Alexandria has always been and will always be many things to many people, but last week it was for many academics and literary scholars the venue of the 9th International Conference on Lawrence Durrell.

"On Miracle Ground IX", a title which captures the lyricism of Durrell himself, took place between the 23-27 June in the Alexandria of the famous *Quartet*. A function of the International Lawrence Durrell Society — first established 15 years ago — the conference — a fact not unprecedented in the Society's ground, a fact not unprecedented in the Society's history since the 1992 literary enclave was held in Vigor since the lesser-known *Avignon Quartet* —

The one year which Durrell spent in Alexandria, between 1944-1945, as press attaché to the British Embassy, bore rich fruit since it fortunately transpired itself into the *Alexandria Quartet* — *Justine* (1957), *Balthazar* (1958), *Mountolive* (1958), *Clea* (1961) — the work on which his reputation rests. Durrell's very diversified oeuvre includes poetry,

plays, travel literature, criticism as well as a voluminous correspondence. The result was a conference which was as prismatic and rich as Durrell himself. Physics, religion, philosophy, mythology, architecture, visual and plastic arts, were all brought in to shed light on different genres. The spirits of the living and the dead from Plotinus to Nietzsche, Einstein, Derrida and Edward Said were also called upon to mediate the often elusive and enigmatic Durrellian texts.

Since the publication of the *Quartet*, scholars have burned the midnight oil debating whether Durrell's Alexandria is real or imagined. Keynote speaker, fellow novelist and native Alexandrian, Edward El-Kharrit's statement that the Alexandria of the *Quartet* is a "personal idiosyncratic fable" only opened this particular Pandora's box anew, a fact borne out by subsequent papers.

Such abstractions were for later, "bricks and mortar" were the very concrete substance of Mohamed Awad's presentation which ended with a plea for the preservation of the Durrell house in the context of

the conservation of the cultural heritage of the city.

The comparative dimension sparked off by Kharrit's words and presence continued throughout the conference. It was immediately picked up by Fatma Moussa of Cairo University who brought in other Alexandrians including that of the Greek novelist Tsirkas, author of *Drifting City*. Mary Massoud of Ain Shams pointed out Naguib Mahfouz's indebtedness to Durrell for the four-fold technique employed in *Miramar*.

The real Alexandria, despised and rejected, was the subject of many quotations from Durrell's letters in Heba Sharobim's paper. The ubiquitous city came in Malak Hashem's study of the poem "Alexandria", but inevitably other terrain had to be touched upon. Michael Giiven of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute regarded the landscape in *Bitter Lemons* as one imposed on the island of Cyprus while Adrian Barlow of Monmouth School, Wales saw the terrain in *Reflections on a Marine Venus* as more integral to Rhodes.

A memorable plenary session included Omar El-

Hakim, David Roessel and Gerald Vincent who combined the world of architecture with that of literature. The theory in question was that Durrell may have transposed Hassan Fathi's New Gourma onto Greece in the three chapters and one page of notes which make up his unfinished novel *A Village of Turtle Doves*.

One of the more unusual comparisons was made between Durrell's *Quartet* and Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*, a point convincingly argued by Azza El-Kholi of the University of Alexandria. Even more unusual was the correspondence made between the literary text and The City, the famous painting by Mahmoud Said; the disparate link was boldly carried off by Marie Therese Abdel-Messih of Cairo University.

For many Durrell scholars the body is the locus of the action. Both Joseph Boone of the University of Southern California and Roger Bowen of the University of Arizona could read a homoerotic subtext in the *Quartet*. James Nichols of Georgia Southern University analysed the male characters' eternal

search for a mother figure, something that many scholars explain in the light of Durrell's own interrupted childhood. While Shelly Ekhtari of SUNY College could see how Durrell's women had to be demystified in order to be overcome by the intrinsically weak males, Amany Tewfik of Alexandria interpreted bodily disease and disfigurement in the light of colonial discourse.

Thanks to the efforts of Carol Pierce, head of the Durrell Society, Soud Sobhy, conference director, James Nichols, programme director, Ian MacNiven, Durrell biographer, and an impressive organising committee of both Egyptians and foreigners, it was an extremely successful literary gathering. Held at the Cecil Hotel, itself part of the Durrell world, real and imagined, the conference certainly evoked "the spirit of place" as well as a taste of metafiction. It is quite possible that the departing participants, aware that the spell will not easily wear off, could hear the solemn voice of Cavafy, "the old poet of the city", reiterate the famous words "the city will follow you."

Fayza Hassan

President Hosni Mubarak's address to the 35th IAA World Congress

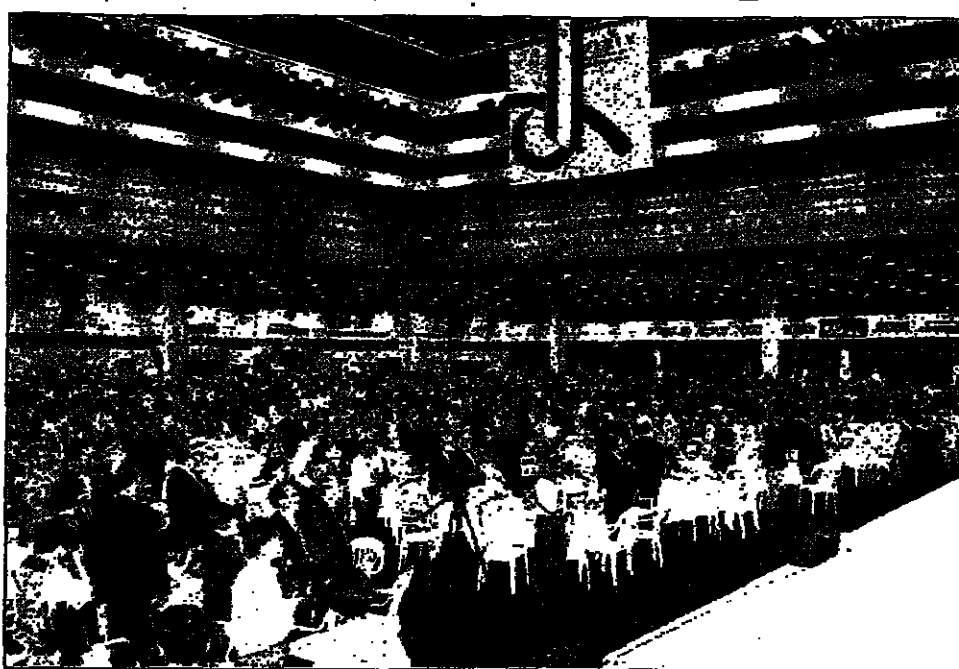
Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the 35th IAA World Congress,

It gives me pleasure to take this opportunity to welcome you to this evening's festivities and to invite you to become acquainted with the 36th IAA World Congress, which will be held in Cairo in May 1998.

I am certain that when you come to Cairo to share in the work of your next congress, you will be given the opportunity to become closely acquainted with Egypt, the people and the country.

You are sure to enjoy visiting its unique antiquities, which are a witness to 7000 years of ancient civilization, and learning of its modern renaissance, making your last congress a fruitful experience.

'Interaction' is the theme of the Cairo congress and the choice of the theme and venue cannot be more fitting. The Egyptian civilization is synonymous with communication and interaction between people, cultures and religions. Egypt's history, which is unique, is evidence



Members of the congress standing for the Korean and Egyptian national anthems

enough that this interaction is not only possible but is also desirable and full of riches.

The revolution in communications has made our world a small global village, just as the media in Egypt in all their forms, have been able to cover a great deal of ground in keeping pace with this revolution to find for them-

selves a fitting place on the international map of information.

Information's creative scope can greatly contribute towards building bridges and consolidating understanding between cultures and civilizations, contributing towards peace, security and economic welfare in every part of the world.

I therefore invite you to contribute your constructive efforts, in order to continue your noble goals. In bidding you farewell, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the success of your 35th IAA World Congress and look forward to welcoming you to Cairo in May 1998.

Have a good evening!

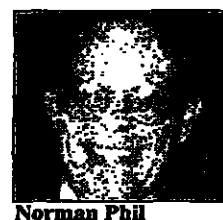
Executive manager of IAA New York: A most impressive speech from Mubarak

MEMBERS of the IAA worldwide gave enthusiastic responses after the success of the Egyptian Night held at the conclusion of the 35th IAA Congress in Seoul. Although these responses and reactions will be published in a complete report next week, here is a look at what some had to say:

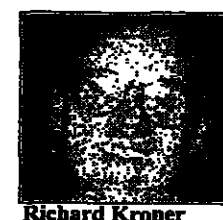
Richard Kroner, executive director of the IAA of New York: "What impressed me most was the address of President Hosni Mubarak, through which he invited everyone to visit Egypt to attend the 36th IAA Congress in 1998. This indicates the Egyptian government's support for the congress, which will be a key factor in making the forthcoming event a successful one. I am certain that preparations for the 1998 IAA Congress are in full swing."

In an interview with Mr Norman Phil, general manager of the IAA, he said after a visit to Istanbul, he will stop in Cairo to meet Mr Adel Afifi, president of the IAA Egyptian chapter, to review the preparations for the 36th IAA Congress in 1998 which Egypt will host.

He added that he visited Egypt 11 years ago, and during the 35th Congress gained an impressive image of the country, not only through videotape presentations, but through the



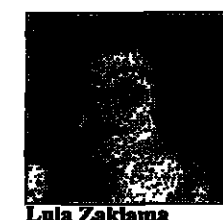
Norman Phil



Richard Kroner



Myung Ha Kim



Lula Zakaria

Tamoura folk-dancing troupe and the Oriental music played at the Egyptian Night.

Mr Myung Ha Kim, president of the IAA Korean chapter described the Egyptian Night as beautifully impressive. "It inspired all attendees, and I hope the theme of the 1998 IAA Congress, 'Interaction', will be a continuation of the 35th Congress' theme 'New Vision'." He referred to communication as an important means in the age of the information revolution.

Kim expressed his hope that Egypt would become a global communication centre.

IAA board elections

The IAA board elections are held every two years in the country hosting the congress. Elections for the posts of IAA president, vice-president and board members were held in which Lula Zakaria won the post of vice-president for conference affairs, and Galal Zaki became a board member.



Mr. Sun-Yoon Kim, chairman of the board of IAA in New York; Mr. Adel Mohamed Afifi, president of the IAA's Egyptian branch; and the three winners who will attend the 36th conference, held in Cairo, as Egypt's guests



Mr. Adel Mohamed Afifi with three winners from the AdPista conference held in Bahrain last April who will attend the Cairo '98 Congress, along with Galal Zaki, IAA board member

THE LEAST that can be said about the Egyptian Night, which took place at the conclusion of the 35th IAA Congress in Korea, is that it was like a beautiful symphony. It was a successful event that generated interest among the 2500 attendees from all countries of the world.

Safwat El-Sherif, minister of information, stated that Mubarak's address was displayed on 3 big-screen televisions at the opening of the Egyptian Night. The address was objective, concise and shed light on Egyptian civilisation.

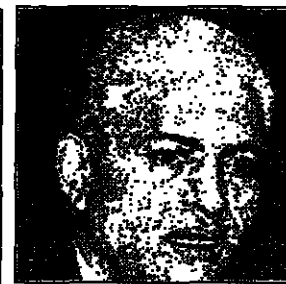
Mamdouh El-Beltagi, minister of



Safwat El-Sherif
minister of information



Farouk Hosni
minister of culture



Mamdouh El-Beltagi
minister of tourism



Ibrahim Nafie
chairman of the board and
editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram



Mohamed Amin Shalagami
Egyptian ambassador
to Korea

tourism, said that a documentary film was shown about Egypt's hotels, beaches, sports and monuments. All

attendees were clearly impressed by the film.

Farouk Hosni, minister of culture,

was the one who recommended the El-Tannoura troupe to perform at the Egyptian Night. Their performance

of folkloric dances grabbed the attention of all who attended.

Ibrahim Nafie, chairman off Al-

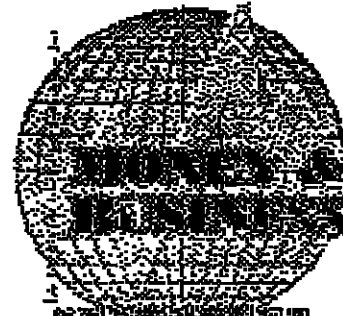
Ahram Establishment and editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram, said that Al-Ahram spared no effort to support the idea of the congress, adding that Al-Ahram became a corporate member of the IAA. Al-Ahram also rallied the support of ministers and officials in promoting the Egyptian Night. The response was great.

Egypt's ambassador to Korea, Mohamed Amin Shalagami, did his best to accommodate Egyptian delegation in Korea. He made their stay a pleasant one and attended the reception party, receiving guests along with the rest of the IAA members.

Increase in capital for El-Mohandes

THE BOARD of directors of El-Mohandes Insurance Co. have agreed to increase their issued capital by LE8mn, bringing the paid capital up from LE22 to LE30mn. Samir Mustafa Metwalli, head of the company, explained that the subsequent increase in company shares would be offered to shareholders at the rate of LE10 per share. He pointed out that this decision is in accordance with government regulations which limit the capitals of insurance companies to LE30mn.

MONEY & BUSINESS



Egyptian-Canadian project

THE MINISTRY of Electricity has devised an ambitious programme for the manufacture of spare parts for generators, the first of its kind in North Africa and the Middle East. The programme, implemented by the Egyptian-Canadian Boilers Co, is aimed at ending international monopolies and providing job opportunities for Egyptian technicians. The company has now begun manufacturing heavy-load boilers according to international specifications.

Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt

Financial statement as of 18 May 1996

Results achieved in LE	18 May 1996	29 May 1995	Growth rate
Total balance	6424	6226.5	3.2%
Deposits	5074.7	4933.3	2.9%
Investment balance	5825.1	5665.4	2.8%
Revenues	570.4	508	12.3%
Net profits	287.2	245.9	16.8%

The value of profits distributed during May 1995/May 1996 totalled LE275.5mn in comparison with LE245.9mn during the previous year.

The number of companies which the bank established and in which it holds shares as of 18 May 1996 reached 38, whose total capital is LE1121mn. The bank holds shares worth LE196mn. in these companies.

Egypt in international fashion exhibition in Cologne

EGYPT is participating in the Fashion on Top international exhibition for men's, children's and sports clothing in Cologne, Germany, which will include 1750 companies from 50 countries and 350 international clothing designers.

This year Egypt will be represented by 10 companies in the exhibition, having a prominent position among the 1750 exhibitors, 52 per cent of which are from outside Germany, displaying their fashion designs for spring/summer 1997 on the stage, which takes up 165 thousand sq. m. Among the countries participating in the exhibition: Italy, the United States, Great Britain

and Holland. This year, for the first time, the following countries will participate in the exhibition are 8 companies from the Philippines, 4 companies from Venezuela and 5 companies from the Balkans. Another pavilion will be set up for undergarments and swimwear.

The exhibition will also feature a special pavilion, "Fashion on Top", which will include more than 200 exhibitors from 14 countries offering 350 new designs for spring/summer 1997, from the major fashion houses of Great Britain, Italy and France. The exhibition will also include a special pavilion for casual and

sportswear.

Shoe manufacturers will also be showcasing their latest designs in footwear for spring/summer 1997 competing among themselves for the spotlight.

The new attraction at this year's exhibition will include, for the first time, a fashion show by the Japanese fashion house Can-Tzu on Friday, 2 August 1996. Can-Tzu will also be a guest at a discussion of international fashion, which will be translated simultaneously into a number of languages so that attendees from different nations would be able to follow the discussion.

Al-Ahram computer exhibition

IN TAKING interest in the latest developments of computer technology, Al-Ahram Establishment is making preparations for the 5th Al-Ahram Computer and Information Technology Exhibition which will last from 27 February to 2 March 1997 at the Semiramis International Hotel in the Cleopatra, and Neferiti halls, as well as the foyer. The exhibition follows the 5th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, to be held at the same location, organised by the Egyptian Computer Association in cooperation with the Faculty of Computer Science and Data Processing at the University of Helwan; the American University in Cairo; the National Institute for Telecommunications and Al-Ahram Centre for Management and Computers (AMAC). The exhibition will be sponsored by some of the largest computer companies and banks operating in Egypt: IBM, Xerox, ETS, Blue Max, National Bank of Egypt and Banque Misr. Over 35 companies specialised in the field of computers in Egypt will participate.

SMG&W offering free service

SMG&W is now offering a service examination with oil and filter change, absolutely free for its customers.

Shawqi Ghattash, chairman of the board of SMG&W, and Mostafa Wahdan, member of the board, said that this is keeping in line with the company's wishes to provide the best service possible to Mercedes owners in Egypt.

In an interview with Magdi Badir, service manager at the company's location in Ard El-Liwa, Mohandessin, he stated that the service centre has an area of 5000 m2, with 38 work areas, and 3 quick-service areas, equipped with the most modern tools and equipment for tune-ups, wheel alignment, in addition to test equipment of the highest calibre. Its technicians and servicemen have been well-prepared with the highest level of training to carry out their work with efficiency.

Maryam Ghattash, public relations manager, said that the company wants their customers to have confidence in all the services which the company provides to them.



EgyptAir: The first Airbus 321 owner in the Middle East

EGYPTAIR has signed a contract to purchase 4 Airbus 321 planes, allowing non-stop service to all of Europe, most of Central and North Africa and the Arab world.

The Airbus 321 can seat 190 passengers, in addition to 10 business-class seats on each flight. The fully-equipped Airbus 321, capable of flying to the Americas, will replace the carrier's older models and will be delivered during May, June, August and September 1999.

The contract includes a provision for the manufacturing company to convert two 300 B4 planes into cargo planes in order

to facilitate the transport of Egyptian exports, which have shown a marked growth, to the international marketplace.

The contract was signed by Mohamed Fahim Rayan, chairman of the board of EgyptAir, and Harry Korenberg, regional sales representative for the Middle East. Rayan stated that this purchase will further modernise the EgyptAir fleet, attracting more customers. He added that while customers are pleased with the economic advantages of the Airbus 320 currently in use, they will further benefit by the company's purchase of Airbus models 340 and 321.

Green fever

Egypt's five-star hotels are competing to become as green-friendly as can be. Rehab Saad looks into who's made it to the finish line

Caring about the environment now tops the priority list of Egypt's five-star hotels. They've nurtured a green thumb image and practice by planting trees, protecting the desert wildlife, recycling paper and glass and supporting environmental associations. Some have upgraded their standards to such an extent that it seems to be a matter of competitive concern.

At the Semiramis, you can now order from food menus made of recycled paper instead of high-gloss ones. No longer are their Christmas cards made of ordinary paper, they are environment-friendly and decorated with embroidery and patchwork by the daughters of the zabbalin (garbage collectors) at the Mokattam mountain.

After 50 Semiramis employees visited the zabbalin settlement with the Mokattam Environmental Preservation Association last year and got familiar with efforts they could make on their end, the hotel began to separate organic and inorganic waste in its kitchens and other outlets. In this manner, they help the Mokattam garbage sorters and reduce health hazards to them and their families. "Yes, we get publicity from that," admitted Nabila Samak, the Semiramis public relations manager, "but this benefits everybody. Our role should involve more than providing food, drinks or accommodation. If we do not do something soon, it is the future generations that will suffer."

While the Semiramis is focusing on garbage, the Sonesta hotels are keen on preserving the wildlife of the desert, especially migratory birds. They are cooperating with Dr James Dinmore of Sinai Wildlife Projects. "We give him food to put in the desert for the birds migrating from Europe to Africa," said Nagwa Enad, director of public relations at Sonesta. "We also encourage schools that hold bird-watching trips by providing children with lunch boxes." She added that hundreds of species of birds travel south in the winter and back to Europe in the summer. The majority of the birds take the route through Sinai. "The big birds always get stuck there, especially the white storks, which become too weak to complete the migration," said Enad.

In fact, they get stuck in Sinai because they avoid flying over water. Rather than crossing the Mediterranean, they fly via the Levant and down through Sinai where they rest briefly to prepare for the shortest possible flight over water into Africa — some 130 km between the southern tip of Sinai and mainland Egypt. Unfortunately, many birds are so exhausted by then that they either don't have the energy to make the sea crossing, or they attempt it and perish in the water.

Birds and animals are not the only concern of Sonesta which also cares about making the desert green. "We have an ambitious plan to plant trees on the road from the city of Sharm El-Sheikh to the airport. We want our children to enjoy a greener environment," said Enad, adding that they're spreading the word with Sonesta's own "Green Egypt" stamp for outgoing mail.

Just last month, most of Egypt's five-star hotels finished turning the garbage dump of Al-Fustat, in the Gamkhyia district, into a large olive and palm tree garden. Sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, this ambitious "plant-a-tree" programme required each hotel to plant trees according to the number of rooms it had, resulting in a garden of 5,000 trees. "This is a national duty," said Nagui

Omar, deputy general manager of Le Meridien Heliopolis. "In Cairo, we need such green areas because it is the lung by which we can breathe. And people should be taught in school how to preserve the environment," he added. In June of last year, Le Meridien Heliopolis held an environmental day celebration. Labeled "Plant a Tree Today", seeds were distributed to the day's guests — actors, journalists, government officials, hotel employees, and others — to encourage them to plant trees wherever they could.

Hotels are also asking their guests to protect the environment and save energy. The Luxor Movenpick "Think Green" programme involves asking guests if they agree to have their bed sheets changed every second day instead of on a daily basis. They also ask them to put soiled towels they want replaced in the bathtub.

For waste management, office paper is used on both sides, reducing consumption by 30 per cent. Garden and kitchen green waste is recycled to produce a natural, rather than chemical, fertiliser. Soap bars are also recycled.

To protect the environment from chemical pollution, window glass cleaner, bathtub tiles and furniture polish are all prohibited, as are toilet liquid fresheners. To avoid air-pollution, all buses and cars parked in front of the hotel are prevented from running their engines while waiting for guests.

At Le Meridien Heliopolis, old carpets are removed from floors under renovation and, if still in good condition, are reused in offices and in the back area of the hotel. Towels, sheets and tablecloths are reused as cleaning cloths, dusters or laundry bags. "We try to use environment friendly products. In this manner, we preserve the environment and save a lot of money," Omar said.

To prevent sound pollution, they are also making efforts to reduce the noise of motors, machines and pumps. To prevent air pollution, the hotel created non-smoking rooms and non-smoking sections in their restaurants.

At the Semiramis Intercontinental, water savers have been installed throughout the hotel. Energy-saving lamps have been introduced into guest rooms and public areas. Boilers have been converted from oil to gas, and natural gas was introduced to the kitchen. To reduce the use of plastics, the hotel is using wicker baskets to deliver pressed and folded laundry. It also uses carton packaging for soap and shower caps and glass jars for marmalade rather than plastic packaging.

At the Sonesta-hotels, staff training programmes are organised to increase the awareness of the importance of natural resources. "When workers are aware of the importance of preserving the environment, it is easy to convey this to the guest," said Enad.

All hoteliers interviewed confirmed that these programmes benefit them as well as the society in which they live. "This indirectly increases the number of my guests. If we are greening the desert, we are making our country more beautiful and this will attract a lot of tourists. The more we preserve our resources, the more people will come to enjoy it," Enad said.

Omar of Le Meridien Heliopolis stressed that these programmes create a new market share and are considered a kind of promotion "because some clients prefer to stay in environment-friendly hotels."



Riddle at Karnak

THE CAMERA of Sherif Senbol roves around Karnak. Jill Kamel describes his unusual shot.

Beneath the giant architraves and between the bulky column and wall reliefs of the Karnak Temple complex at Luxor lie records of the temple's growth from a modest shrine to a local deity — a temple of splendid and unimaginable proportions dedicated to the King of Gods, Amun-Re. An area of the complex which is infrequently visited — it does not lie on the regular route — is the Festival Hall built to the rear of the main temple. As the late afternoon sun shines through a row of square pillars on the western aisle through to the first row of columns of the central colonnade, it casts dramatic light on a somewhat ruined statue to the north which raises some interesting questions.

It is a royal statue, as is clear from the royal skirt with dagger in the belt. But of whom? True, a cartouche on the upper left-hand side of the wall identifies Men-Kheper-Re, which is the premonition of Thutmose III, but the evidence cannot be taken at face value. It might originally have

been a statue of Hatshepsut that was usurped and re-inscribed by her successor.

The statue seems to have been flanked by two others. A question that presents itself is the nature of the missing figures. Was the king flanked by the two goddesses, say Hathor and Mut? Or did the whole represent the Theban Triad of chief god Amun-Re, his consort Mut and son Khonsu?

Unravelling the secrets of the two thousand years during which the temple was constructed has been a major feat of Egyptology, made even more difficult by family rivalries and kingly jealousies. Thutmose III was the king who created a vast Egyptian empire in some 1470BC but he was no war-monger. He never appointed governors over the conquered territories. Instead, he gave power to the local chieftains, started cultural relations by bringing sons of the chieftains to Egypt and returned them to their homelands after they had absorbed Egyptian culture, ideology and religion.

The Festival Hall, like other parts of the Karnak Temple complex, is undergoing conservation.

How to get there

Buses

Super Jet, East Delta and West Delta buses operate throughout Egypt.

Super Jet

Super Jet stations are located in Al-Meridien (Heliopolis), Tahrir, Giza, Ramses Street and Cairo Airport. Buses travel to Alexandria, Port Said, Hurgada and Sinai. Tel. 772-663.

Cairo-Alexandria

Services almost every half hour from 5.30am to 10pm, from Tahrir, then Giza, Al-Meridien and the airport. Tickets LE19 until 9pm; LE21 thereafter, from the airport LE24 until 9pm; LE30 thereafter.

A VIP bus with phone access leaves Al-Meridien at 7.15am. Tickets from Al-Meridien LE26; from the airport LE32 each way.

Cairo-Port Said

Services every half hour from 6am to 9pm, then 9am, 11am, 3pm, and 4.30pm, from Al-Meridien, then Ramses Street. Tickets LE15 each way.

Alexandria-Port Said

Service 6.45am, from Ramses Square in Alexandria. Departs Port Said 3.30pm. Tickets LE22 each way.

Cairo-Hurgada

Services 8am and 2pm, from Tahrir, then Giza and Al-Meridien. Tickets LE40 until 5pm, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Alexandria-Hurgada

Service 9pm, from Ramses Square, Alexandria. Departs Hurgada 2.30pm. Tickets LE60 each way.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh

Service 11pm, from Tahrir, then Al-Meridien. Departs Sharm El-Sheikh 11pm. Tickets LE50 each way.

East Delta Bus Company

Buses travel to North Sinai, South Sinai, Suez and Ismailia. Buses to Ismailia and Suez depart from Qalati (near Ramses Square), Al-Meridien and Tahrir Square (near Heliopolis). Buses to North and South Sinai depart from the Sinai bus station at Abbassya Square. Tel. 482-4733.

Cairo-Ismailia

Services every 45 minutes from 6.30am to 9pm, from Qalati, then Al-Meridien and Tahrir Square. Tickets LE35 until 5pm, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Cairo-Suez

Services every half an hour from 6am to 7pm, from Qalati, then Al-Meridien and Tahrir Square. Tickets LE35 until 5pm, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Cairo-El-Ain

Service every hour from 7.30am to 4pm, from Qalati, then Al-Meridien and Tahrir Square. Tickets LE35 until 5pm, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh

Services every 45 min. from 7am to 6.30pm from Abbassya, then Al-Meridien. Tickets LE30 until 5pm, LE40 thereafter, both each way.

Cairo-Hurgada

Services 8am, 10.30am, 10.45pm and 11pm. Tickets LE38 each way.

Cairo-Sinai

Services 8am and 3pm. Tickets LE25 each way.

Cairo-Omari

Service 10pm. Tickets LE38 each way.

Cairo-Luxor

Service 9am. Tickets LE35 each way.

Cairo-Ain

Service 3pm. Tickets LE50 each way.

Trains

Trains run to Alexandria, Port Said, Luxor and Aswan, from Ramses Station. Tel. 147 or 575-3333.

Cairo-Luxor-Aswan

"Branch" deluxe trains with sleepers. Services to Luxor and Aswan 7.40pm and 9pm (reaching Luxor 10am and 11am). Tickets LE294 for foreigners and LE129 for Egyptians. To Aswan LE389 for foreigners; LE141 for Egyptians.

"Branch" deluxe trains without sleepers. Services to Luxor and Aswan 6.45pm, 8.45pm and 9.45pm. Tickets to Luxor first class LE251; second class LE31. Tickets to Aswan: first class LE63; second class LE37.

Cairo-Alexandria "Torium" trains. Service 8am. Tickets first class LE32 with a meal; LE33 without a meal. Standard trains: Services 9am, 11am, noon, 3pm and 7pm. Tickets first class LE22; second class LE17.

"French" trains. Services hourly from 6am to 10.30pm. Tickets first class LE28; second class LE12.

Cairo-Port Said. Services 6.30am and 8.45pm. Tickets first class LE45; second class LE26.

EgyptAir

There are between two and five domestic flights daily. Check EgyptAir: daily 198-0999; Open 390-2444, or Hellos 759-9806.

Cairo-Aswan. Ticket LE200 for Egyptians, LE991 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Luxor. Ticket LE220 for Egyptians, LE780 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Hurgada. Ticket LE780 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh. Ticket LE246 for Egyptians, LE821 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Sunny summer deals

Hotels

Here's a look at the special rates most hotels, especially in the Red Sea, are offering to Egyptians and foreign residents.

Hurgada. Hurgada Intercontinental. LE200 for a single room for a double room including service and taxes. Valid until 15 July.

Hurgada Marriott. LE200 per person in a double room including breakfast, service charge and taxes. Valid until 15 July.

Helwan Region Hurgada. LE170 per person in a double room including breakfast, service charge and taxes. Valid until the end of the summer season.

Sharm El-Sheikh. Sharm El-Sheikh Marriott. LE240 for a single or double room including breakfast, service charge and taxes. Valid until 31 July.

Sharm El-Sheikh. LE190 for a double room and LE130 for a single room including breakfast. Valid until the end of June.

Sharm El-Sheikh Movenpick Hotel. LE200 for a single and LE250 for a double room in the front by the swimming pool. The hotel offers LE140 for a single and LE200 for a double room in the back, or sports area. Prices include breakfast, service charge and taxes. Valid until the end of July.

Travel agencies

Travel agencies are offering various packages both inside and outside Egypt this summer.

Flamingo Tours. A trip to Nice to LE225 for 3 days, Nice and London to LE240 for 15 days. Santa and Farnham to LE225 for 11 days. Athens and Rhodes to LE230 for 10 days. Paris and London to LE230 for 13 days. Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok to LE235 for 19 days. Prices for a special cruise around the Mediterranean in deluxe boats start from \$1,327 for 6 days.

Karnak tours is organizing trips to Karnak for 3 days. Prices start from LE225. The company is also offering a package for 6 days at prices starting from LE215.

Karnak tours is organizing trips to Karnak for 3 days. Prices start from LE225. The company is also offering a package for 6 days at prices starting from LE215.

Mysteries surround unearthed mausoleum

Buried Fatimid ancestors found in a newly discovered funerary complex will soon be subject to DNA testing, reports Omayma Abdel-Latif

"We know that the Caliph and his family arrived in Cairo in 973 and that they brought with them the remains of their ancestors in wooden coffins. These we have now found," said French archaeologist Roland-Pierre Gayraud. So far, two hundred skeletons have been excavated.

For the past eleven years, he has been excavating Ismail Anar's Al-Qarafa Al-Kubra — a cemetery located on the plateau to the extreme south of Al-Fustat. It was only this season, however, that his decade-long work was brought to fruition when a huge mausoleum was found.

It is believed to have been built in 980 at the orders of Al-Walida Pasha (the queen mother) whose name was Taghrid and who is believed by Gayraud to be the widow of the first Fatimid caliph of Egypt, Al-Mnezz Liddin Al-Ash, and the mother of the second caliph, Al-Aziz Billah. The latter ruled after his father's death and remained in power for twenty years.

The area, according to Gayraud, has never been studied in depth, although the plateau

of Al-Qarafa Al-Kubra contains many monumental tombs, funerary mosques and saints' tombs of the Fatimid era.

"All the roads were paved with stone. There were numerous gardens, a carefully maintained water system and we found a number of decorative stuccos," Gayraud said, adding that the Fatimid necropolis contains the families of Egypt's Fatimid rulers and the remains of their ancestors brought from North Africa when they settled in Egypt and ruled from 969 to 1171AD.

Three coffins were found in a large vault sur-

mounted by a *qubba* (cupola) at the heart of the mausoleum. In the coffins, the first layers of skeletal remains are articulated but the lower are in complete disarray. Other burials in the complex are individual wooden coffins placed in crypts. Several are equipped with embroidered *trous* (shrouds) of fine silk — a special covering used for the dead.

"Nobody could buy the *trous* fabric at the time. It was officially reserved for the caliphs and the vizirs who might have presented them as gifts to favoured ones," said Gayraud who surmises that

high-ranking members of the Fatimid family were buried in the mausoleum, even though caliphs were usually buried in Turba Za'afaran or Hadra al-Sharifa to the north of Al-Fustat.

Gayraud and his team were surprised to find a number of wooden coffins with collective burials — a practice that runs against the Islamic

law. "We cannot account for this phenomenon except to suggest that lack of space was perhaps the reason they had to cram the dead next to each other," he said.

Another mystery surrounds the identities of some of the remains. The body of an old woman found in one tomb may be that of the queen mother. In another tomb, 17 women are buried along with unborn fetuses. And a man with a beard dyed red from henna was found wrapped in three shrouds bearing the name Al-Mnezz.

In the main mausoleum, Gayraud found a collection of bodies. "The remains of ancestors brought in from Tunisia," he said, adding that he will examine some of the skeletons in Paris, where they will be sent to undergo DNA testing to determine their lineage.

The excavation in the area of Ismail Anar, according to Abdallah El-Azhar, head of the Islamic excavations department at the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), is beneficial to history; the area is providing enormous quantities of well-preserved material said is shedding light on the little-known early centuries of Islam. "The discoveries are providing some indication of the urban character of early Al-Fustat," he added.

"And the study of the tombs and funerary rites is throwing light on the contrast between theory and real practice."

Among the other finds Gayraud has come across is the most ancient but incomplete mosque site known in Egypt dating back to the mid-eighth century. It includes a finished prayer



A member of the Fatimid family wrapped in a piece of *trous* with Koranic verses photo: Gayraud Shari'a (Islamic

Air taxis take off

Time-conscious professionals and tourists are no longer confined to EgyptAir flight schedules; they can just grab an air taxi. Sherine Nassr reports

Call a tourist company, find your way to the airport and climb aboard an air taxi — usually a small first-class ten-seater airplane equipped with a toilet, fridge, satellite communication and meal service.

"The service was first introduced in Egypt in the early 1980s, but it has never been as well organised or effective as during the last two years," said Mohsen Salaheddin, captain of one of the private planes.

As the door opens to more foreign investments in Egypt, many tourist companies have found it profitable to operate such planes, for both tourists and businessmen. "Foreigners are quite familiar with air taxis because the service was established in Europe a long time ago," said Salaheddin. Although businessmen are especially targeted, attractive clients include "large families or groups who wish to travel to different destinations in the shortest

time possible," said Mohab Akhrouk of one tourist company, adding that private flights are cheaper than airline flights in such cases.

Customers pay only for hours in flight and the air taxi is hired on an hourly basis. "Time spent waiting for landing and take-off is free," said Salaheddin. When the aircraft is hired for several days, customers are charged on a daily basis.

Air taxis primarily make domestic flights. The most frequent destinations are Hurgada, Sharm El-Sheikh, Luxor and Abu Simbel. They can also be hired to travel as far as Jordan, Greece and Turkey.

A study is now being carried out by tourist companies who own aircraft with a view to stabilising the cost of the service. "Profit-making is not our ultimate goal at present. We'd rather have the service well established in Egypt first," said Salah El-Din, adding

that air taxis are extremely expensive in Europe. "We need to take advantage of this fact to promote our services, especially these days when businessmen are coming to Egypt."

The latest additions to the air services are two ambulances that fly the sick to the nearest hospitals, anywhere in the country. They are compact intensive care units with a bed, oxygen mask and attendant doctor. Two other doctors are on call 24 hours a day.

"The service will prove most useful to tourists involved in sea sports in the newly developed areas of the Red Sea and Sinai," said Akhrouk. "If a diver should need emergency treatment, the air ambulance will be vital."

Both the air taxis and ambulances depart from airports nationwide. The control tower is informed of the flight plans one hour before arrival and passengers' names, passport numbers and flight routes are reported to the airport authorities before take-off.

EGYPT AIR	
Telephone numbers of EGYPT AIR offices in governorates:	
Abu Simbel Sales Office:	34834-34735
Alexandria Offices: Kamel:	4833571-4820776
Gleem:	585461-5854534
Airport Office:	4218444-4227886-4282871-4281989
Aswan Office:	315889/172/234
Airport Office:	498387-498548
Asht Office:	321511-322711-324000-329497
Mansoura Office:	363776-363733
Hurgada Office:	443591/4
Airport Office:	442833-443597
Ismailia Office:	328377-321550-321951/2-328376
Luxor Office:	385580/172/234
Airport Office:	381567/8
Luxor Office Karnak:	382348
Marsa Matruh Office:	934398
Mossina Office (Sheikh El Kom):	233302-233523-233522
New Valley Office:	538/941695
Port Said Office:	224129-222676-228721
Port Said Office Karnak:	238333-239976
Sharm El-Sheikh Office:	688314-688489
Airport Office:	686488
Taba Office:	068/538914-538911
Direct:	5783624
Tanta Office:	311750/311789
Zakazik Office:	349829-349839/1

Defeat, retreat, dissolve

The future created by Zamalek's walkout in last week's crucial match against Ahli has had repercussions probably undreamed of by the players. In fact the fall-out from their decision has proved to be just as dramatic as the match itself.

Within 48 hours of the defeated Zamalek side quitting the pitch five minutes before the final whistle, amidst allegations of biased refereeing, the face of Egyptian football had undergone a major change. Gone were the old Zamalek board of directors. Gone too, the board of the Egyptian Football Federation (EFF). Saved, according to supporters of Abdel-Moneim Emara, head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), was Zamalek's reputation, along with the club's place in the superleague.

Events began to unfold at an emergency meeting of the Zamalek board held the morning after the defeat. The team's protest had been based on a refusal to accept Ahli's second goal, which, Zamalek maintained, was offside. Hysterical arguments with the referee were to no avail, and, prompted by an unidentified member of the Zamalek camp, the team walked off the pitch. The referee waited, the team did not return, and Ahli took the match 2-0. In the cold light of day, Zamalek stuck

to their position of the previous night — that the referee chosen by the Egyptian federation had been biased. "Kadri Abdel-Azim, the referee, is well-known to be an Ahli fan and his bias towards Ahli has been clear in certain matches," said Galal Ibrahim, ex-president of Zamalek. "We told the EFF and Emara that we didn't want Abdel-Azim, but no one listened."

By the end of the meeting, the board had come up with a strategy, which it released in a statement: a freeze on football in the Zamalek Club for all age groups, and total disassociation with the EFF. All Zamalek footballers who played for national teams would have to leave those teams. All Zamalek coaches and administrators working in national teams would have to submit their resignation to the EFF, or Zamalek would never deal with them again. And Zamalek would withdraw from all events organised by the EFF until the federation agreed to a replay of the Ahli match with a foreign referee.

Concern over the match had already been shown in various quarters, but when news of Zamalek's decision broke, Emara was besieged by phone calls and faxes, some from influential sources in Egypt and the Arab countries. Their message was clear: something had to be done. Emara hardly hesitated. That same day he issued a statement announcing the dissolution of the board of directors of both the Zamalek Club and the EFF.

According to Emara, the decision to dissolve the federation was based on the failure of the board to run Egyptian soccer, as was evident in the Ahli-Zamalek incident. "Unfortunately, this was obvious to everyone during the Ahli-Zamalek match," explained Emara. "It was the federation's failure which led to the chaos and confusion. The SCYS, being the official authority responsible for sport in Egypt has been very patient with this federation. It has made a lot of errors over the past few years, but this was the final straw. We could no longer tolerate it because it could have led to a situation

where hooliganism prevailed."

However he pointed out that federation elections were in three months time, so his decision would not have a long-term impact on the EFF. Until that time, a five-member committee, appointed by Emara, will look after the federation's affairs. The committee consists of Mohamed El-Siagi as president, assisted by Mahmoud El-Khatib, Ibrahim Yousef, Qadri Abdel-Halim and Farag Bayoumi.

The dismissed former president of the EFF, Dahshoury Harb, received the news in Hurgada, where he had gone with his family the day after the match. He was informed of the decision as he stepped off a boat after a fishing trip.

which is largely responsible for the deterioration in Egyptian sport."

All he had wanted, he added, was to remain in post long enough to see Zamalek relegated from the superleague to the first division. Relegation is a punishment facing any team which walks out of a match.

Meanwhile, temporary federation President Mohamed El-Siagi is modest in his aspirations for his new role. The league will resume as previously scheduled and he doesn't plan any major changes. "It would be unfair, and also useless, for me to be taking decisions in a matter of hours, changing the clubs' preparations and schedules," he remarked. "My task comes at a crucial time. The committee and I have a hard job ahead of us and not much time to do it. We will exert all our efforts to make it a success."

Their task will be made easier, perhaps, by the other half of Emara's two-pronged attack: the dissolving of the board of the Zamalek Club. By laying the blame on the shoulders of the board, rather than the

players, Emara saw fit to allow Zamalek to remain in the superleague. He has appointed a new committee for the club, consisting of Kamal Darwish as club president, and Abdel-Aziz Qabil, Mahmoud Badreddin and Azmi Megahed as members. They will remain in charge for a year.

At a press conference, Emara explained his position regarding the rebel club. By walking out, Emara said, Zamalek had put its reputation on the line. And by issuing their statement, the board of committee was putting an end to Zamalek's existence in the superleague. "This is not what the Egyptians want," stressed Emara. "I tried as best I could to prevent a disaster which could have affected Egypt on all levels."

Feelings at grassroots level are mixed. Many Zamalek fans are still angry. After both the defeat and Emara's decision, fans gathered outside the club, either to protest the defeat, the refereeing, or at what they saw as Emara's interference in internal club affairs.

But is Emara yet another thorn in Zamalek's side, or was he acting to save a great club, with an illustrious history and a bright future, which had put itself in danger of falling from grace?

Germany's golden goal



EURO 96

A GOLDEN Goal in the fourth minute of extra-time has made Germany the Euro 96 champions — the first time a major championship has ever been decided under the Golden Goal rule, by which the first team to score in extra time wins the match, writes Eric Asanangha. It was also the first Golden Goal of the Euro 96 championship, a tournament littered with cliffhanging finishes and exasperating penalty shootouts.

A 73,611-strong crowd, including Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Prime Minister John Major, Czech President Vaclav Havel and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, witnessed Sunday's final. The Czechs, who had started the championship at odds of 66-1, were the first to score, from a controversial 57th minute penalty by Patrik Berger following Matthias Sammer's foul on Karel Poborsky slightly outside the box. The equaliser came from German substitute Oliver Bierhoff, with a close-range header from Christian Ziege's cutting freekick.

Both teams had near misses. Four minutes before half-time, Kuzin penetrated the Czech defence, forcing Kouba to race off his line. The sting was taken out of Kuzin's shot by the goalkeeper's body block, but it took a bicycle kick from a Czech defender to boot the ball out of danger. But perhaps the saddest miss of all was about two minutes before time, when substitute Vladimir Smicer, just back from his own wedding, almost scored the winner.

But in the end the day was Germany's. After 90 minutes of play, the teams were back on the pitch for extra time. Bierhoff, pinned down on the edge of the box, turned and shot through a narrow space in the Czech defence. Kouba, moving in the wrong direction, was just able to get his hand to the ball, but could only watch as the shot bounced off the post and trickled over the line. The Golden Goal had been shot, and Germany were Euro 96 champions.



Germany's Markus Babel clashes with Pavel Kuka of the Czech Republic during the final of Euro 96 at Wembley Stadium in London (Photo: AP)

A star to watch

Mansoura meet Ahli in today's Cup Final. And for young Mansoura player Tamer Bagato, the game could be the first step on the road to football stardom, writes Abeer Anwar

Tamer Bagato never expected football stardom. Like lots of boys, he loved the game, and like lots of boys, he played on a club team. He started playing for the Shams Club at the age of nine, but did not dedicate himself exclusively to football, enjoying swimming and squash just as much.

At the age of 12, Bagato was spotted by Ahli's junior coach during a friendly match, and offered a place on their junior team. He stayed with Ahli, and was the team's top scorer from the age of 14 to 21.

Anwar Salama, then head of the national under-19 team, also recruited the young Bagato, and he went on to represent Egypt in India's Gandhi Tournament and the African Nations Juniors qualifications in Mauritius. He excelled in both events, and was the second highest scorer in the Mauritius competition, with only one goal difference behind the Cameroonian winner.

However, despite performances like these, Ahli did not consider the young player first team material. "This was a shock for me," recalls Bagato. "I decided to stop playing the game completely and started to hate even watching football." But,

family and friends convinced him that he did indeed have a future in football, and that he should try his luck with another team.

"I went to Zamalek but their players' list was full," continued Bagato. But he struck lucky with Suez Canal and Mansoura. Both teams offered to take him. Bagato decided to sign with Mansoura for LE50,000. "Because I signed late, I had to stay on the substitutes' bench for a long time because the league tournament had already started and I was not used to playing with the team," Bagato explained. But, with time and help from Coach Hassan Megahed, he became one of the team's key players.

Being one of Mansoura's key players is not, one might think, a gateway to overnight fame and fortune. But when Mansoura is matched against Zamalek, and when that Mansoura key player scores not one, but two, goals, thrusting his small town team into the Egyptian Cup finals, then he is the player everyone will be talking about the next day. This is what happened to Bagato.

The Cup final itself has been postponed until 4 July. For Bagato, the

match will be both a team and a personal challenge — after all it was Ahli who had turned him down early in his career. While waiting for that match, Bagato has been able to gain some satisfaction when Mansoura met Ahli in the league tournament, by scoring the game's only goal.

"I can't express the mixed feelings I had before the match," Bagato recalls. "It was a mixture of fear and happiness: fear because it was my first match against Ahli, and happiness because at last I had the chance to take on Ahli and show them that they had missed out on a good player when they refused to take me on."

Bagato's prediction of a Zamalek league victory turned out to be wrong. But, needless to say, he is working hard to prevent Ahli winning the double.



Bagato on the road to football stardom

Olympic countdown



Global village

THE ATLANTA Committee for the Olympic Games is doing its best to ensure that athletes and officials participating in the 1996 Olympic Games are comfortably housed, and provided with as many services as possible.

Participants will stay in eight Olympic villages, the largest of which is the Atlanta Olympic Village, located at the downtown campus of Georgia Tech.

Spanning 108 hectares, the Atlanta village is the largest in Olympic history and the first to be fully air-conditioned. Accommodation comprises 17 new apartment-style buildings, 25 renovated buildings and 33 renovated campus fraternity and sorority houses.

The village includes training sites for three sports — baseball, athletics and tennis — and is conveniently located next to the boxing and water sports competition venues, which are at Georgia Tech.

Housing up to 15,000 Games participants and 9,500 staff and volunteers, and receiving hundreds of accredited visitors every day, the Atlanta Olympic Village will function as a small city.

Athletes can take their mind off training and competition by enjoying a wide variety of recreational facilities, including a cinema, bowling alley, video arcade, health club, recreational swimming pool, cafe and disco. Concerts and other performances are scheduled for the village's 33 days of operation, and the Atlanta village is also the site of the World Information Centre and World Wide Web Pavilion, where athletes can surf the Internet.

Athletes will not need to leave the village to do their shopping. The village marketplace includes a department store, international newstand, dry cleaner, hair salon, bank, post office and florist.

More than 1.2 million meals will be prepared for village residents, as many as 60,000 a day when the Games are at their peak. The main dining hall, with 3,400 seats, will be open 24 hours a day.

And to cater for the spiritual needs of the athletes, there are separate worship areas for Buddhist, Christians, Muslims and Jews, with counselling and ministerial services available.

The Atlanta Olympic Village also has its own transport system. Electrically-powered trams, bicycles and golf carts will be used to help residents move quickly from one village location to another.

Government meeting

PRIME Minister Kamal El-Ganzouri and Abdel-Moneim Emara, head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), met with members of the Egyptian Olympic delegation on Monday. At the meeting, Hassan Mustafa, secretary-general of the Egyptian Olympic Committee, described various problems facing the delegation, mainly concerned with releasing the necessary sports equipment and clothing for the team.

As a result of the meeting, El-Ganzouri instructed Minister of Finance Mohamed Gharbi to personally look into this problem. In addition, El-Ganzouri and Emara agreed to grant the SCYS full authority to make decisions concerning the import of clothes for teams representing Egypt in international competitions.

Emara also took the opportunity to stress that, as a relatively new body, the SCYS would not take responsibility if the Olympic results turned out to be worse than expected. "We are doing our best to improve sports in Egypt," said Emara, "but we can't change sport in a day and a night." Meanwhile, El-Ganzouri urged the athletes to do their very best to achieve results which would satisfy the Egyptian public.

Egypt strikes African gold

The Egyptian team won eight medals with only six athletes at last week's All African Championships, reports Dalia El-Hennawy

The Egyptian athletics team made a good showing in the 10th All African Championships last week in Yaounde, Cameroon. With only six athletes, the team managed to bring home eight medals: one gold, three silver and four bronze. A total of 30 countries took part, with Nigeria scoring an overwhelming victory, followed by Kenya and Tunisia.

Egypt's star of the event was shotputter Hassan Khaled, who took the gold medal, followed by Wafaa Baghdadly in the silver medal position. Nagwa Ibrahim set a new Egyptian record in the five kilometres walk to win the silver with a time of 24:05.4, and Hassan El-Sayed won not one but two silver medals — in the decathlon and the pole vault. Karima Meskin won bronze medals in both the 200 and 400 metres, and Henfy Abdel-Magsooud took the bronze in the 400 metres hurdles.

"We faced a lot of obstacles," commented Egyptian technical manager Hamed El-Kafrawy after the championship. "The many weather, which we weren't prepared for, the fact that some of our athletes couldn't attend, and the food, which we weren't used to."

But taking these disadvantages into account, El-Kafrawy was satisfied with his team's performance. "I'm quite happy with the result, because I was looking more at the athletes' development rather than winning medals per se. Most of our athletes either achieved new personal records, new Egyptian records, or else won a

gold medal," he continued. "This means that they are gaining experience and shows that our training programme is going well, which is a good sign as far as the juniors are concerned. We're concentrating on the juniors at the moment because they are beginning to show great promise."

Exams were largely to blame for the absence of some of Egypt's key athletes, according to Abeer Atef, manager of the Egyptian Athletics Federation. Sherif El-Hennawy, Egyptian and African champion in the hammer throw was one such athlete. "He had been expected to win the gold," commented Atef.

"And Mohamed Sami, Egyptian champion in the 110 metres hurdles, was a sure thing for a bronze, as was Hatem Mersal in the long jump. We would certainly have come out better in the African ratings if they had been there."

Nevertheless, Atef added, Egypt would be participating in the East and Central African Championships in Uganda. "This will be excellent competition, especially with the Kenyan, Ethiopian, Ugandan and Tanzanian champions taking part."

And, with an eye on preparing a team for the 2000 Olympics, plans are also afoot for the junior athletes to train in Stuttgart in Germany.

Edited by Inas Mazhar



(l-r): Moments of dialogue with Sadat; heading a conference of the Arab Lawyers' Federation; receiving benediction from Pope Kirolos; advocating a case in court; campaigning for syndicate elections (photos: Al-Ahram)

Ahmed El-Khawaga: The rallying cry

Summer by the sea? Well, maybe... Just a few loose ends to tie up first: there's the Bar Association, and freedom of speech, and that other trial — yes, the big one...



At ten, his workaholic schedule begins to wind down in preparation for the small hours of the night. It is time to relax, but never completely, really: there are always the inevitable phone calls — rounding up work from the Bar Association, or setting appointments with clients.

He smokes heavily, despite a history of heart trouble. At 67, his face has not lost its chubby lines: there are more black hairs on his head than white. But he never gave much thought to his health. Until a few years ago, he'd trek the four kilometres from his home in Giza down to his office at the Immobilia building on Sherif Street. But he lost the habit, bound in the never-ending cycle of work, and weakened by his recurrent health crises.

A man comes in with cups of Turkish coffee. The atmosphere in the house has vastly changed over the past year and a half, since his wife Wafaa passed away. He lights a cigarette. "It is not easy, after forty years of living with someone, to be alone." He is brief. She was strong, sharing all his activities — central to the very fabric of his life. He shifts his leg, nervously, betraying himself.

Her death came at a vulnerable moment, when he was facing what may have been the greatest crisis of his thirty-year career in the Bar Association. The Bar underwent sequestration last January by virtue of a court sentence.

The verdict ended a deadlock brought on by accusations that the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated council was guilty of financial malpractice and monopolising the Bar's political motives.

Although El-Khawaga, head of the Bar, was appointed as one of its three sequestrators, he appealed the verdict. "I see what happened as an expression of absolute dysfunction. I warned the Brotherhood council members that their attempts to monopolise the Bar, which has always been a national body — above any particular political affiliations — would bring

things to a head. Now they tell me I was right."

El-Khawaga has been accused of partial responsibility for the Brotherhood's increasing hegemony over the council since the 1992 elections. He turned a blind eye, his critics say, to the Brotherhood's obvious violations of syndicate regulations, despite his public denunciations of its practices — others would see his reluctance to take action as typical of his pragmatic power-balancing acts.

"To have brought things to a confrontation with any party inside the syndicate would only have deepened the split within it. I see that what I did was not compromise, but integration. It is this which enabled me, at this point, to arbitrate between the different factions in the current dispute."

He is the interest-broker: his skill may have been one of the reasons for his phenomenal success as a contender in the Bar elections. He headed its council for eight terms, three of them in the '60s, and now, having exceeded the allotted number of times candidates can stand for re-election, is currently in his last term.

Born in El-Mahalla El-Kubra in 1929, Ahmed El-Khawaga and his generation of lawyers came after the grand masters of the liberal age. He was of a new breed, and perhaps one of a kind. His star rose, his political acumen found expression under Nasser. He was mercurial, nevertheless, adapting to changing exigencies and negotiating union and political issues successfully in the socialist '60s and the liberal '70s.

Academically brilliant and politically active during his university years, he graduated from the Faculty of Law in 1949. He belonged to the highly politicised student union as well as the Wafd's youth organisation, the Wafdist Vanguard.

His rise through the ranks of the Arab Socialist Union was meteoric, from the legal committee to the Committee of 100. A clever campaigner, he ran for parliament and became a member of the Na-

tional Assembly (Maglis Al-Umma), then head of the Bar in 1966. He quickly moved it into line with Nasser's socialist policies, pushing forth legislation which resulted in the admittance to the Bar of employees working in public-sector legal departments. He strengthened the Bar's subsidiary branches in the provinces, and was successful in securing sources of funding.

He became head of the Arab Lawyers' Federation in 1967, a position he has held ever since. Non-alignment and pan-Arabism were at their peak, and El-Khawaga headed delegations to various summits and peace conferences. In the turbulent days following Camp David, El-Khawaga worked to keep the federation in Cairo despite the Arab boycott of Egypt. For thirty years he balanced the federation's contending factions. He is "proud that, despite Sudan's recent attempts to have the federation moved, it still remains in Cairo."

Arrested in May 1971 during Sadat's "Corrective Revolution", he made a comeback in 1978, winning the Bar elections against the then head, Mustafa El-Barad'i.

Throughout the late '70s, El-Khawaga led a strong council representing an array of independent, Nasserist, Marxist and Wafdist groups. It spearheaded opposition to the Camp David accords, and clashed with Sadat over "democracy and the syndicate's independence". The council was twice disbanded by Sadat.

There was exacerbation, and one responded. Sadat wanted to turn the Bar into a social club, but it was not possible because of its history, because of its great nationalist tradition," El-Khawaga says with feeling. "It was the very first Egyptian syndicate, founded in 1912 by Ibrahim Pasha El-Hilbawi to establish equal status for Egyptian lawyers with respect to their foreign counterparts. It was headed by Saad Zaghloul, it led the national struggle against the British — by its nature, it

could never have remained inward-looking."

El-Khawaga joined the new Wafd Party in the '70s — not a renunciation of his Nasserist sympathies, but a bit of nostalgia for the "old Wafd", the repository of the liberal democratic influences which formed his generation. In the '70s and '80s, he found a means of expressing his convictions. Since the mid-'70s, he has defended almost every single case involving freedom of expression and liberal values. He opposed the banning of *One Thousand and One Nights* when it came under onslaught for its alleged "obscenity". He was one of Youssef Chahine's defendants in the case brought against *The Immigrant*, and also participated in the defence of university professor Nasser Hamed Abu Zeid, dragged to court for presenting academic research which Islamist groups considered heretical.

El-Khawaga has also been prominent, most often in his capacity as head of the Bar, in controversial political cases — most, but significantly not all, dear to the left. He was a lawyer for the defendants in the "Egypt's Revolution" case, which involved President Nasser's son Khaled. He was part of the defence of Soliman Khater, a soldier accused of killing Israeli tourists, who later died in prison. He contested the trial of civilians in military courts in cases brought against the Muslim Brotherhood.

El-Khawaga is often described as the supreme pragmatist: a Nasserist among Nasserists, a Wafdist among Wafdist, and, rumour has it, a member of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Charismatic, he has the capacity "to forge an empathetic bond with others". He has been described as exhibiting "fox-like cunning", combining gritty up-and-at-em confrontation with deceptive flexibility. He takes criminal cases, rather than civil law where his heart really lies. Never authoritarian, he elicits compliance from his assistants with inimitable tact.

His command of the Arabic language belongs to

an almost-forgotten tradition. He is erudite, a brilliant speaker, difficult to confound, he keeps his adversaries on their toes in any public debate. But throughout his career, in the very bitterest moments of public confrontation, he would stick to dialogue with his opponents, leaving bridges open. When his wife died, it was his adversaries who bore her coffin. Her funeral was attended by over a thousand lawyers; signs of every political stripe were present — across the spectrum from the opposition to the NDP.

When tension was exacerbated during the Bar's latest crisis, and he was almost broken by his personal loss, his friends told him to resign. Take a rest, they said, take a break from the strain. Your past record is enough; you can leave the syndicate honourably at a moment of impending disintegration. El-Khawaga refused. Seemingly leaguered, he made a U-turn. No more confrontation: he became the mediator. Because of his legacy of past success, and because of all those bridges, thrown down over the years, he became the rallying point — the one individual able to juggle the contending factions and bring the Bar out of its historic impasse, steering it towards more balanced elections at the end of this year.

Perhaps when the task is done he will, as in summers past, spend August in Mamoura, by the sea. He prefers its pedestrian qualities to the exclusive resort his daughters took him to last year.

And perhaps, as in summers past, he will wait on one of the bamboo chairs set out every night in the garden of his small bungalow, ready to receive his visitors. He will always be a part of things around him.

Clad in a white *galabiya*, surrounded by lawyers, politicians, ministers and friends, he will sit, unceremoniously — a star.

Profile by Aziza Sami

Pack of cards by Madame Sosostri

There's not many people who can boast being given a magnificent garden as a wedding present, but that is exactly what my good friend and colleague Pascale Ghazaleh and independent researcher Mohamed Hakeem got, even if it only was for the night of their wedding party. It was thanks to publisher/historian Maged Farag that his spectacular Mohamed Ali Club was the location for the party, made all the more magical against an idyllic backdrop of the Nile, sprawling gardens, palm trees and flowers and marble balustrades. It was an elegant yet casual affair, elegant enough to be a true wedding in every sense of the word, yet casual enough for the guests to let loose and really enjoy themselves. A veritable dream for us Weekly staff, whose idea of getting dressed up means putting on a clean shirt. We showed up in droves, ready for some serious partying. Rumour had it that most people were pretty merry before they showed up, and those who weren't claim that it wasn't long before they were; university friends and professors, colleagues and friends at work, artists and intellectuals galore were all as sparkling as they could possibly be. Every where I looked I saw old friends and familiar faces. Throughout the evening I caught glimpses of, and chatted to, actress Mounira Tawfik, poet/songwriter Sayed Hegab, artist Mohamed Abta, political scientist Gamil Matter, singer Khaled Geyossit, artist Gamil Shafiq — whose daringly designed wedding invitation was something the guests would all hold on to for a long time to

come — and his lovable wife Sola, caricaturist Raouf Ayad and radio/TV announcer Bethayna Kamel. Her husband, professor Emad Abu Ghazi, was just one of a school of professors and lecturers present, including director of the Arab Research Centre Helmi Shasrawi, historians Mohamed El-Kordy, Nelly Hanna, Raouf Abbas, and sociologist Abdel-Baset Abdel-Moeti. While some treated themselves to the delicious BBQ and pastries and others danced and mingled, some, including the bride's mother, colleague and friend Fayza Hassan, were more than happy to just beam the whole evening long. The mood was so elated that nobody seemed to mind that almost all the songs being played by the DJ were by

the couple left yesterday for Paris is where they will be turning a business trip — they are both attending a conference there — into a ready-made honeymoon.

Every now and then I feel the need to give a little more to society than just my graceful and charming presence, and decide to attend an event more for its substance than for its social value. My good deed for the month will be to attend the Arab Youth Forum's Training and Awareness conference, which was inaugurated by head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Abdel-Moneim Emara, director of Cairo University Marid Shehab and AUC's deputy head of Student Affairs Abdel-Khalek Allam yesterday at AUC. Held under the academic auspices of secretary-general of the Arab League Emad Abdel-Meguid and his special political advisor Nassef Hitti, the conference will bring together students from Arab and Egyptian universities. And believe me, dear, from what I've seen of previous student conferences such as this, I have no doubt that it will be a huge success. Head of the organising committee, Mohamed Radwan, tells me that this particular one aims to provide the appropriate environment for the exchange of experience, knowledge and culture — of which there is much, I'm sure — among the region's youth and provide them with the necessary skills to become future leaders and decision-makers in different fields.

Tired of business meetings and social obligations, US ambassador Edward Walker re-

cently hosted a day of games, dancing and eating at the US Embassy for its Egyptian and American staff. And so it was to be that one sunny afternoon, several improper teams battled it out in the back yard of the premises for the worthy title of Toughest Football Team in Garden City.

The games inevitably gave way to a hearty lunch, after which staff members kept the embassy rocking by showing off their singing 'talents' through a roaring karaoke system, prompting many of those watching to break into uncontrollable jitters and other dance concoctions.

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